SHOUT
SHARE
IT

WIVES OF THE GOD-KING

The Rituals of the Devadasis of Puri

Frédérique Apffel Marglin

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To Steve

— Et l'Idole où tu mis tant de virginité,
Où tu divinisas notre argile, la Femme,
Afin que l'Homme pût éclairer sa pauvre âme
Et monter lentement, dans un immense amour,
De la prison terrestre à la beauté du jour,
La Femme ne sait plus même être courtisane!
— C'est une bonne farce! et le monde ricane
Au nom doux et sacré de la grande Vénus!

Arthur Rimbaud, extrait du poème
'Soleil et Chair'

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2 Two devadasis: Lalitha (left) and Radha (right).

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4 A post-menopausal widow temple attendant (*pūjāriṇī*) sitting in front of the image she cares for. The markings on her forehead indicate she is a Vaishnavite.

5 A *maithuna* from the temple of Konarak.

6 Painting by Śrī Jagannātha Mahāpātra of the citrakāra (painter) caste. This is the first painting (first *khanda*, first *pada*) of a series which illustrate the *Rāmāyaṇa*. The artist also composed a six-line poem to accompany the picture which reads in free translation:

Having performed the worship of the Gods Gaṇapati,
Nārāyaṇa, Rudra,
Ambikā and Bhāskara, those five deities,
And having worshipped the seven chapters of the *Rāmāyaṇa*,
the seven seas,
Having commented through poetry and painting, I am publishing
(that) Seducing Ṛṣyaśṛnga, the courtesans united (with him);
They brought him on a boat by the orders of (king) Lomapada.

(*The painting was acquired from the artist*)

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(*From the collection of Ajit Mookerjee*)

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(d) the *bhoga Maṇḍapa*
(*The palm leaves are a gift from Pandit Sadasiva Ratha Sarma*)

10 Designs, made from ground rice paste, drawn by women on the walls of their house at the time of Lakṣmī *pūjā* in the month of Mārgaśīra (November-December).

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12 The king, wearing a turban with an aigrette, performs the ritual sweeping of the chariots. The broom is being carried upright by an attendant (second man behind the king).

13 The king, upon his return from the ritual sweeping of the chariots, is worshipped by the people in the palace. Around his neck he wears the deities' garlands and pieces of cloth. He carries a sword, the symbol of the Kshatriya.

14 Baḷabhadra's chariot is being pulled. In the background, Jagannātha's chariot is parked in front of the eastern gate of the temple. Subhadrā's chariot, to the right of Jagannātha's chariot, is not visible. (Viewed from the roof of the palace.)

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(*Reprinted with the permission of H. Kulke and H. von Stietencron*)

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difficulties one encounters in field work. This relationship can perhaps best be captured by two terms, 'brother' and 'collaborator'. The former term, by which I address him, defines the nature of our relationship with its kin-like closeness, and the latter the nature of his contribution to this work. In lieu of thanks let me simply say that without him I could not have accomplished what I did.

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Frédérique Apffel Marglin

Introduction

Background

This work began as a field study of the rituals of the female dancers and singers attached to the temple of Jagannātha in Puri, Orissa. Such women are generally referred to by the term *devadāsī*[1] which literally means 'female servant of the deity'. The study led me, unexpectedly, to other concerns, principally to a concern with kingship. This work, hence, bears on many topics such as women, goddesses, kings, and the nature of their power. Because it was conceived as a study of the rituals of the devadasis, it must be borne in mind that all these other concerns are dealt with as they arise out of a close attention to the practices of the devadasis. In other words the perspective from which an observer views anything gives what she/he views a particular angle. I for one do not hold the position that an observer—however well trained he or she might be—can find an Archimedean point from which to present a truly synoptic view. The view of any observer will be coloured by the perspective chosen, the point of entry, as well as by that observer's predilections, blind spots, and other particularities. As has been pointed out in some recent work in what has come to be called 'reflexive anthropology', the personal circumstances of the observer are not unrelated to the choice of perspective, point of entry and choice of central informants (Crapanzano 1980, Rabinow 1977). A reflection on these connections has been highly illuminating. It is also the kind of exercise which enables the reader to better evaluate the work he or she is about to read, tearing as it does the illusive veil of omniscient objectivity.

In order to evaluate the kind of knowledge offered in these pages it is necessary to reflect on the simple question: why did I choose to study the rituals of the devadasis? Implicit in such a procedure is the view that it is not sufficient to answer 'because it has never been done'. This is true enough but why this topic rather than another one and why at this time? A reflection on such questions seems to me inescapable once one has abandoned what Lakoff and Johnson call 'the myth of objectivity' (1980).

In order to answer this question I will have to start with the devadasis and how I became fascinated by them. My interest in the devadasis was born when I studied Indian Classical Dance in Delhi. For three years I devoted myself to the practice of dance (between 1964 and 1968). After initially learning the then better known southern and northern styles (Bharata Natyam and Kathak) I soon devoted myself to Oḍissi, the eastern style from the province of Orissa. In Oḍissi I found a blend between soft rounded sensuousness and powerful square strength, a combination which held a profound fascination for me. I think that for a Western woman this combination is an exciting one, most likely because improbable and perhaps unavailable in her own tradition.

The teaching of classical dance in Indian cities today is totally divorced from the dance's roots in the traditional setting of temple worship. As a foreigner, I was able to study the dance because there has been in India a movement closely allied with various social reform movements, which created the category of 'Indian Classical Dance'. With the creation of this category went the founding of such institutions as conservatories, dance schools, and research academies on the performing arts. Most such movements were started at the turn of the century. The term 'classical' does not really translate any indigenous term even though the reformers refer to the *mārga/deshi* dichotomy in this case. The term *mārga* literally means 'the way' and *deshi* means 'of the land or place', that is the local style. This pair of terms does not correspond exactly to the classical/folk or popular dichotomy since local or regional styles of dance are themselves divided into folk and classical. Furthermore I have never heard any of my informants talk in such terms; they call Oḍissi simply 'dance' (*nāca*), making no stylistic distinction between it and other forms of local dancing. It may even be that the reformers adopted those indigenous terms for the purpose of translating the English pair of terms 'classical' and 'folk'. The adjective classical reflects the Western model of the reformers: Indian Classical Dance connotes a status on a par with Western Classical Ballet. The reform movements effected a divorce from the traditional milieu of the dance and replaced it with new, secular, institutions on a Western model.

The fact that the word 'classical' does not translate an indigenous term should not be misconstrued to mean that Indian dance is neither ancient nor codified. Quite the contrary; Indian dance tradition is in fact considerably more ancient than its Western counterpart. Evidence

from sculpture suggests the existence of an already full-blown tradition as early as the second century BC. The tradition was extensively and comprehensively codified in a Sanskrit text—Bharata's *Nāṭya Sastra*—which scholars date around the fourth or fifth century AD.[2] Given the indisputable antiquity of the dance and its status as a 'great tradition' encoded in Sanskrit texts one might ask what motivated the Indian reformers to have recourse to a Western category to think of their tradition, and to Western-types of institutions for its continuation.

Social Reform: the impact of the West

For the Indian who was a product of English education, everything in his/her culture had to be restated in Western terms. Such a transformation bestowed status on things Indian whose meanings withered in the eyes of the Indians themselves under the paternalistic gaze of the colonialists. I will attempt a close look at this transformation in the one case of the devadasi and of Indian dance.

The motivation of the Indian social reformers is to be found in the nature of the response on the part of Western observers when confronted with the institution of the devadasis. I have chosen as representative of this reaction a relatively early work attributed to the Abbé Dubois.[3] This work was written in the later part of the eighteenth century and published in the early nineteenth century in both French and English. It was and still is widely read (having been reprinted numerous times) and can be taken as both a representative and influential statement, suited to embody what I call the typical Western response to the devadasis. I will quote at some length the relevant passages:

> Next to the Sacrificers, the most important persons about the temples are the dancing girls, who call themselves *Devadasi, servants or slaves of the gods*; but they are known to the public by the coarser name of strumpets. Their profession, indeed, requires them to be open to the embraces of persons of all casts [*sic*]; and, although originally they appear to have been intended for the gratification of the Brahmans only, they are now obliged to extend their favours to all who solicit them.
>
> Such are the loose females who are consecrated in a special manner to the worship of the gods of India. Every temple, according to its size, entertains a band of them, to the number of eight, twelve, or more. The service they perform consists of dancing and singing. The first they execute with grace,

though with lascivious attitudes and motions. Their chanting is generally confined to the obscene songs which relate to some circumstance or other of the licentious lives of their gods.

They perform their religious duties at the temple to which they belong twice-a-day, morning and evening. They are also obliged to assist at all the public ceremonies, which they enliven with their dance and merry song. As soon as their public business is over, they open their cells of infamy, and frequently convert the temple itself into a stew.

They are bred to this profligate life from their infancy. They are taken from any cast [*sic*], and are frequently of respectable birth. It is nothing uncommon to hear of pregnant women, in the belief that it will tend to their happy delivery, making a vow, with the consent of their husbands, to devote the child then in the womb, if it should turn out a girl, to the service of the Pagoda. And, in doing so, they imagine they are performing a meritorious duty. The infamous life to which the daughter is destined brings no disgrace on the family.

These prostitutes are the only females in India who may learn to read, to sing, and to dance. Such accomplishments belong to them exclusively, and are, for that reason, held by the rest of the sex in such abhorence, that every virtuous woman would consider the mention of them as an affront.

These performers are supported out of the revenues of the temple, of which they receive a considerable share. But their dissolute profession is still more productive. In order to stimulate more briskly the passion which their lewd employment is intended to gratify, they have recourse to the same artifices as are used by persons of their sex and calling in other countries. Perfumes, elegant and attractive attire, particularly their beautiful hair, multitudes of ornamental trinkets adapted with infinite taste to the different parts of the body, a graceful carriage and measured step, indicating luxurious delight; such are the allurements and the charms which these enchanting sirens display to accomplish their seductive designs.

From infancy they are instructed in the various modes of kindling the fire of voluptuousness in the coldest hearts; and they well know how to vary their arts and adapt them to the particular disposition of those whom they wish to seduce.

This early ethnographical account is then followed by an interesting comparison between the devadasis and Western prostitutes:

At the same time, notwithstanding their alluring demeanour, they cannot be accused of those gross indecencies which are often publicly exhibited by women of their stamp in Europe; particularly the exposure of the person and the lascivious airs which one would think capable of inspiring the most determined libertine with disgust: on the contrary, of all the women in India, the common girls, and particularly the dancers at the temples, are the most

decently clothed. They are so nice in covering every part of the body, as to have the appearance of being affectedly precise, or as if they intended, by the contrast with the more open attire of other dames, to excite more strongly the passion which they wished to inspire, by carefully veiling a part of the charms which it covets.

Neither can they be reproached with that impudent assurance exhibited in public by the Messalinas of Europe. Shameless as the dancing girls of India appear to be, they will not venture, upon any occasion, to stop a man in the streets, or to take any indecent liberty in public. And, on the other hand, a man who would take such liberties, even with a prostitute, so far from being applauded, or joked with, by the spectators, as happens in some other countries, would be obliged to hide his head for shame, and would be treated with marks of indignation.

Relaxed as the manners of the Hindus are, they know how to observe, in public, that decorum which every class of people owes to another, in the intercourse of life; and which are never violated, with impunity, but in nations arrived at the last degree of corruption.

The Abbé concludes his remarks on temple rituals with the following sweeping condemnation:

Such is the outline of the religious ceremonies of the Hindus, and such the spirit of idolatry which prevails among them. A religion more shameful or indecent has never existed amongst a civilized people.[4]

Even though Abbé Dubois' report is not lacking in ambivalence, the concluding line is a clear and forceful condemnation. The ambivalence expresses itself in the use of two kinds of terms; one set of terms are heavy with moral condemnation such as 'loose', 'lewd', 'stew', 'strumpets', 'obscene', 'infamy', 'profligate', 'dissolute' and another set of terms reveal a reluctant admiration such as 'grace', 'elegant', 'attractive', 'exquisite', 'beautiful', 'infinite taste', 'graceful', 'enchanting'. This mixture of the sinful and the sensuously beautiful is Europe's classical recipe for the exotic. The devadasis, as can be imagined, were prime targets for an exotic one-sided imaginative reconstruction. They form the subject matter of an early nineteenth century operatic play by E. de Jouy, *Les Bayadères*.[5] Goethe has an elegiac poem on the same subject which became the libretto for a famous nineteenth century ballet *La Bayadère*. This ballet has become a standard item in the repertoire of both American and European ballet companies and it continues to be recreated.

The European fascination with the subject as reflected in some of its literature and dance seems to have had no influence on the Indian

mind. The Indian reaction to the European response was wholly in terms of the latter's moral condemnation, not of its fascination for an exotic custom. This might have something to do with the fact that the European exoticizing gaze is born out of the aforementioned blend of sin and beauty. In any case, the Indians felt they could reclaim the beauty only at the cost of separating it from what they themselves came to see as sinful and deserving of moral condemnation.

Two judgements are implied in this last sentence. First, that the perception of moral depravity as pertaining to the devadasis is a Western construction which in turn implies that this might not be an accurate perception of the devadasis. Second, that Indians of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have internalized Western moral judgements and applied them to a part of their own tradition, that part which elicited from Westerners the most fiery of moral condemnation.

At the end of the nineteenth century, a group of English-educated Indians started a movement which came to be known as the 'anti-nautch campaign'. The word *nautch* is the anglicized version of various Indian vernacular words for dance, all deriving from the Sanskrit root *nāc*-. The movement started in the South but quickly found sympathetic echoes in the North and other parts of India.

On 9 November 1892 the Madras Hindu Social Reform Association was founded (*Madura Mail*, 17 March 1894). The aims of the association were the following: to promote (a) female education, (b) marriage reform, (c) domestic reforms and reforms in such customs and manners as are injurious, (d) gradual amalgamation of castes. One of the conditions of membership was 'not to invite a nautch-woman or other fallen woman for singing, dancing or other purposes' (ibid.). The anti-nautch part of the reform movement was categorized among those movements aimed at eradicating customs and manners that were injurious. Nautch women included devadasis and other dancing and singing women.

In the passages from the *Madura Mail*—an English language newspaper published in the Southern city of Madura (present-day Madurai)—pertaining to the anti-nautch campaign,[6] no distinctions are made between dancing-girls, nautch-women and devadasis. They are all spoken of as being prostitutes and hence as being immoral. What is striking to me is that the writers felt no necessity to justify their moral condemnation which they took to be self-evident. Several passages make reference to court cases involving these women; the following is one example:

(Under Local and Provincial)
Madura district court: Mr. Dumergue has recently decided that a dancing girl has no right to compel the Trustees of a Devastanam by suit to allow her to be pottu-tied, on the ground that the ultimate object of the pottu-tying is to carry on prostitution and hence is immoral (*Madura Mail*, 13 January 1894).

What seems to have happened in this case is that a devadasi—a 'dancing girl' in a devastanam, i.e. a temple—had sued the temple to force it to perform the dedication ceremony. This ceremony, referred to as the *pottu-tying*, is a marriage ceremony in which the woman is ritually married to the deity in the temple by tying around her neck the symbol of married women in the South. Such a ceremony entitles the woman to dance and sing in the temple and makes her a devadasi. What does this terse newspaper account tell us? It tells us that the court system—established and run by the colonial power—has labelled the sexual activities of the devadasis 'prostitution' and has furthermore ruled that because of this sexual activity the woman has no right to engage in the traditional occupation of a devadasi.

As can be ascertained by the name, the judge in this case is a European. What is interesting to note is that the official position of the British colonial government was one of non-interference in the religious matters of the Hindus. Such neutrality is referred to in a passage from the same newspaper, dating from 2 June 1894: 'Surely the anti-nautch movement is in the long run bound to succeed, the neutrality of the Government notwithstanding.' However, when it came to a specific court case, it is evident that what carried the day was British moral judgement.

Whatever the misgivings of those Indians who wished to see their traditions preserved might have been, the courts had the power of the police and beyond that of the army, behind them. In such a situation of powerlessness, insisting on the devadasis' traditional rights to be dedicated to temple service must have seemed a rather hopeless project. Even though the traditionalists—whose voice is faintly heard in the pages of the *Madura Mail*—had the weight of custom and ancient tradition behind them, there was probably very little that they could do.

The pages of the *Madura Mail* available to me do not give a voice to the traditionalists. However their presence is known through the arguments of the reformers against them. The following passage from the *Madura Mail* makes reference to the opposition of the traditionalists; I quote it in full because the language used by the reformers is remarkable in its use of biblical imagery:

June 30, 1894

[the story of how a nautch woman was pressed upon an unwilling host is related] One gentleman, we should be glad to know his name, insisted upon the bringing of the public woman, it is stated, 'at least to spite the beggars of the anti-nautch-party'. The Prince of Darkness is a gentleman and we have no objection to this person being called one . . . but has it not always been easier for the camel to enter the needle's eye than for the rich man to enter the kingdom of Heaven? But a poor man is not necessarily a beggar.

It may be an ambitious enterprise to unravel the dynamics of the formation of what T. N. Madan and others have called 'the captive mind' (Madan 1982), but I shall here offer the views of one post-colonialist European observer. It seems to me that the preservation of traditions which deeply offended the moral sense of the members of the colonial group was clearly an impossibility. In such a situation of powerlessness, moral condemnation on the part of those in power must have aroused intense feelings of fear of inferiority. Such fears, given the real power situation, apparently were dealt with by a vigorous attempt to eradicate the offending custom, institution or whatever. To gather the strength required to go against centuries—nay millennia—of tradition cannot be achieved without deep conviction. The reformers clearly believed that the respectability of the 'dancing-girls' in the eyes of many Hindus was a mask hiding their 'true' character (see *Madura Mail*, 3 November 1894), their true character being that of 'fallen-women'. Depending on one's point of view this is either consciousness-raising or brainwashing.

As is well known, the traditionalists lost this particular battle and in 1947 the government of the state of Madras, one of the provinces of the newly independent Indian nation, passed a legislation called the 'Madras Prevention of Dedication of Devadasis Act' which made the institution illegal.[7] Even though the new law applied only to the province of Madras it influenced enormously the consciousness of most English educated Indians regarding devadasis.

A New Reconstruction

While learning Oḍissi in New Delhi I had become aware of the origin of the dance in temple rituals performed by devadasis. I had also realized that the subject of devadasis was one about which it was impossible to get clear and satisfactory information. A great deal of contradictory evidence presented itself and in my efforts to find out

as much as I could, I finally realized that a great deal of confusion existed but no solid research or evidence. More than this, I realized that the subject was a very touchy one. In the secular world of dance schools, city stages, and performers, the world of the devadasis was nebulous and shrouded in contradiction. Much emphasis was placed on the 'purity' of the dance, its 'chastity', words which were used synonymously with 'classical'. The prevalent view about the devadasis was that originally they were chaste virgins meant only for the gods, but subsequently with the degeneration of the polity, rajas, zamindars, and other rich and powerful men had wielded their debasing influence on them and forced them into prostitution. An alternative construction was that, due to economic hardship and difficult circumstances, the devadasis had found themselves forced to turn to prostitution to survive.

These views never appeared convincing to me, even though I had at that time no hard evidence to refute them except my love for the dance in which I saw a harmonious blend of eroticism and spiritual devotion which seemed thoroughly in keeping with ancient Indian traditions. From my readings in the epics, classical plays, *purāṇas*, and other texts, I did form an image of the highly accomplished women dancers, singers and artists which these texts call *gaṇikā*, *veśyā*, heavenly and earthly *apsaras*, as well as devadasi. These women were indeed indispensable members of a prosperous and well-ruled kingdom and their presence was required at all joyful public functions. They seemed indeed to be respectable members of the kingdom, even though they were not chaste wives or chaste virgins. J. J. Meyer captures this respectability in his chapter on these women in the epics. When Rāma and Sītā return from their long exile to Ayodhya, Rāma's brother, who had kept the throne for Rāma during the latter's long absence, gives instructions to welcome the king and the queen back:

> . . . all masters of musical instruments, and the *gaṇikā* in full numbers, the king's wives and ministers, the soldiery and the bands of army women, the Brahmans and the nobles, and the corporations . . . all these shall go out to behold the moonlike countenance of Rāma (Meyer 1971:269).

When Rāma and Sītā have arrived, they watch a dance and music performance by the finest *gaṇikās* of Ayodhya.

Lest one think that *gaṇikās* were attached only to the court but not to temples, and hence differentiating between them and devadasis may

not be wholly justified, mention should be made that in Kalidāsa's play *Meghadūta* (*The Cloud Messenger*) *veśya*-s wave the fly-whisk in the temple of Śiva at Ujjain. (Rooke 1935, I:35). Clearly, *apsaras*, *gaṇikās*, *veśyās* and *devadāsīs*, even though contrasted to chaste wives and even sometimes reviled in the texts as low and not deserving of respect because of their lack of chastity, have a place and a time in which their function is required, highly appreciated and, in its context, highly respected. Confusion regarding respectability enters only when one adopts a Western context-free standard of moral judgement as against a Hindu context-sensitive standard of judgement. I am here borrowing A. K. Ramanujan's enlightening distinction between context-free and context-sensitive standards (see Ramanujan 1980).

It is noteworthy that the devadasis of Puri are called both *gaṇikā* as well as *veśyā*. Some of them speak of themselves as 'earthly *apsaras*'; the *apsaras* being the lovely women dancers and singers who adorn the court of the king of the gods, Indra.

My aim is not a study of the courtesans in Sanskrit literature, a work already accomplished by Moti Chandra (*The World of Courtesans* 1973), but simply to sketch some of the grounds for my skepticism *vis-à-vis* the reformers' views. Such skepticism was one motivation for my research project. Let me hasten to add that my skepticism cannot be attributed to superior insight, knowledge, or sensitivity but simply to my historical situation for which of course I cannot claim credit. I am a Western woman who grew up in a post-colonial era; I have been profoundly influenced by the women's movement. The latter, as is well known, has radically altered many attitudes concerning women and particularly women's sexuality. Had I lived a century earlier, my views would probably have been akin to those of another Western woman, deeply sympathetic to Indian culture as well as radically engaged in India's independence movement; this woman was Annie Besant, whose views on the devadasis were favourably quoted by the proponents of the anti-nautch campaign in the pages of the *Madura Mail*:

> July 14, 1894
>
> Mrs. Besant writes of Indian dancing-girls: 'It is absurd to speak of dancing-girls as 'accredited ministers'. The ancient religion trained them as chaste virgins, and their ancient religious functions were dependent on their virginity. Losing that, they have lost their ministry, and my contention is merely that they are far less degraded than the prostitutes of Christendom. Prostitution is

bad everywhere, but under Hinduism it is far less widespread and far less degrading than under Christianity.'

Had I been Indian and deeply committed to keeping the tradition of the dance alive, I would have been heir to the colonial situation discussed earlier, and hence to the impossibility of not dissociating the beauty from what came to be felt as immoral. Such a position is voiced by one of the persons to whom lovers of Oḍissi owe a great deal. This is what Dhirendra Nath Patnaik, secretary of the Orissa Academy of Music and Dance, writes about the devadasis of Puri in his excellent book on Oḍissi dance:

> [the local Oriya word for devadasi is *māhārī*]
>
> Due to the successive Muslim invasions and weak political authority there must have been moral degeneration on the part of the *maharis*. Because, it is from this period that the *maharis* who were originally intended for temples and Gods alone, came to be employed in royal courts as well. From now on, the *maharis* ceased to be respected as *dasis* of the Lord and came to be associated with concubinage (1971:56).

The implication in this passage is that originally the devadasis were chaste and associated with the temple only and not with the court. The later association with the court brought on the custom of concubinage. This view is representative of many if not most English-educated Indians today.

Methodology

The historical research necessary to confirm or refute the above statement was beyond my abilities, even if the records were available, which is highly doubtful. My training has prepared me to do ethnography, which happily the particular historical circumstances of Puri made possible. Due to the fact that a Hindu king was at the head of the large temple of Jagannātha until 1955[8] the institution of devadasis was alive until that time. A census of temple servants, made by state government officials in 1955, counted thirty devadasis attached to the temple at that time. When I arrived in Puri in the fall of 1975 only nine out of these thirty women could be identified as devadasis or ex-devadasis.

Given the climate of opinion about the devadasis in India in general and Orissa in particular, the kind of ethnographic study I was going to do had to take this factor into consideration. I knew that the topic

was a highly sensitive one and that the reform movement would have profoundly affected everyone I would be talking to in Puri, the devadasis included. My answer to this dilemma was to focus my study on the public rituals of the devadasis. I decided to avoid direct questions about sexuality. I was simply not going to raise the issue at all and never ask questions which would indicate a concern with this aspect of the devadasis' tradition or lack of it, unless the devadasis themselves, or other people, brought it up. In other words I consciously decided not to rely principally on informants' interpretations of their tradition but on their descriptions of various practices as well as on direct observation. This brings me to my choice of rituals as the focus of study.

My main interest has been to recapture what the institution of devadasis might have been like before the advent of the social reform movement, and not to record what the institution, or what is left of it, is today. Such an interest was born of my realization that the social reform movement had obscured and/or misrepresented what the cultural meaning of the devadasis was. I suspect that the cultural meanings of the feminine have been profoundly altered for both Indian and non-Indian eyes by colonialism. The institution of devadasis constitutes a limiting case for women, whose interest stems not so much from a dubious exotic appeal but precisely because limiting cases can throw light on the average, common, life of women in the Hindu world.

Given my aim of recapturing or reconstructing a disappearing world, two main problems faced me in the field: (a) the status of informants' responses and (b) the status of the informal logic of everyday life. The first could not be trusted since I expected the social reform movement to have deeply affected everyone I would be talking to in Puri. This turned out indeed to be the case, so much so that I had a very difficult time even locating and meeting the remaining devadasis. I detail in the next chapter the situation I faced in the field. The second had radically altered in the last two decades as far as the life of the devadasis was concerned, ever since the king ceased to be at the head of the temple.

As far as the status of informants' responses are concerned, my problem if perhaps extreme, is not unique. Informants' responses to an ethnographer's enquiries are influenced by many factors, such as the informants' perception of the ethnographer's identity, mission, possible power, etc., as well as the informants' interest, level of knowledge, and particular point of view.

Geertz, in his justly famous essay 'Thick Description', has written: 'only natives make first order interpretations, whereas anthropologists' interpretations are second and third order ones' (1973:15). But in a footnote he qualifies this statement by saying that 'informants frequently, even habitually, make second order interpretations' (ibid.). This does leave open the question of when is an informant's statement first order data and when it is second order data.

In order to distinguish between the two I would use Wittgenstein's idea of understanding the meaning of words and actions in their context of use rather than understanding by decontextualizing and attempting to arrive at the essence or nature of a word or action (Wittgenstein 1968, Needham 1972). Statements taken out of their context of use in a particular life-world—in my case the life-world of the traditional devadasis—are subject to the idiosyncracies of an individual's interpretation. This was particularly vividly impressed upon me by the responses of many informants to the same question about the meaning of the same ritual. There were almost as many interpretations as respondents. However, speech and actions observed and recorded in a context of use are a different matter. The distinction is one between practice and interpretation. There is a third category: that of the description of practice. Descriptions can be said to be partly interpretations since what one chooses to include and to omit, to foreground and to leave in the shadows, constitutes a sort of interpretation. The difference, however, between description of practice and an individual's interpretation is that a practice can be reconstituted by means of collecting descriptions from many sources. By the nature of my endeavour I had to rely heavily on this method. Being doubly handicapped by the fact that what I wanted to study had largely vanished and by the fact that as a non-Hindu I had no access to the temple of Jagannātha, I had perforce to rely heavily on descriptions of practices.

This is not to say that individuals' interpretations should not be part of an anthropologist's data. One must, however, not only distinguish between an individual's interpretation and his or her practice but also between types of interpretations. Some informants' interpretations can readily be identified by the anthropologist—or be so identified by the informant him/herself—as belonging to a recognized tradition or sect which has formulated set exegeses of texts, rituals, and other practices. For example, one of the devadasis belongs to a Bengali (Gauḍiya) Vaishnavite sect and she gave me lengthy

interpretations of certain rituals which she learned about in the monastery (*matha*) of this sect which she attends regularly. The two brahmin preceptors of the king of Puri (called *rājagurus*) similarly gave me *śākta* interpretations of rituals since they belong to that sect of worshippers of the goddess. Often I had different interpretations for the same ritual sequence, some Vaishnavite, some Śākta, and other. Many of my informants did not identify themselves as belonging to any sect or religious tradition. Often their interpretations were similar. I found it useful to categorize such people as belonging to the popular or folk tradition. This is an unformalized, unwritten body of interpretations, subject to more internal variations than sectarian interpretations, but which can nevertheless be identified as a collective tradition since many people share it. Such interpretations can easily be differentiated from highly idiosyncratic individual interpretations.

I have often recorded such different kinds of interpretations in this work. These interpretations can be viewed either as primary data bearing on the sects or traditions to which they belong or can be used by the ethnographer in the task of eliciting a structure of practice. By looking at several interpretations, a particular practice or sequence of practices, can be illuminated and its logic or structure brought out. In other words I have used such interpretations to further my own interpretive task of eliciting an order, a logic, from the practices under scrutiny. Such a procedure can be said to yield third order interpretations, whereas the ethnographer's interpretation performed directly upon practices can be said to yield second order interpretations.

The anthropologist's first order data is people's practices: words and actions in a context of use. The anthropologist's second order interpretation is to extract the logic or structure of the people's life, everyday or not so everyday such as those special, set apart occasions called by various indigenous terms which we translate as ritual. The anthropologist's third order interpretations are those performed with the help of informants' interpretations. So I would rephrase Geertz' view of the anthropological task, namely the eliciting of the informal logic of everyday life, as that of eliciting the (or a) structure of the people's practices. The second or third order nature of this task lies in the fact that discerning a structure is an interpretive task (Ricoeur 1981).

I would not—and by the nature of my project could not—restrict practices to the informal goings-on of everyday life, to which Geertz

gives pride of place. Since the life of the devadasis had so altered in the last two decades, I decided instead to give pride of place to the very formal special occasions of life such as temple rituals and festivals. Why? These are practices of a certain kind, more formal, more conventional, than everyday practices. Ritual practice is highly patterned (Tambiah 1979). I do not consider ritual as a radically different type of practice from that of everyday life. All human practices have an element of conventionality. One should rather speak of a continuum from least formal to most formal practice, the former corresponding to everyday life, the latter to those times and places which all cultures set apart and designate as special by various markers of time and place, as well as by linguistic markers (Tambiah 1979:116). In Hindu India such linguistic markers are words such as *pūjā*, *jātrā*, *uścaba*, *līlā*, which we translate by terms like 'ritual', 'festival', 'ceremony', 'worship'. The two ends of the continuum also contrast in the degree to which the practices are ensconced in contingent events or history. However, it is always a matter of more or less. Even the most elaborately orchestrated and set apart of festivals are not wholly divorced from contingent events, even though they are—compared to everyday practice—relatively detached from them by all the markers and devices which sets these occasions apart.

One could profitably apply to ritual the contrast discussed by Ricoeur between speech acts and a text. Speech takes place in a dialogical situation whereas the text, being autonomous and objectified, is not embedded in the immediate give and take of the dialogical situation. One could say that everyday practice is a transaction between actors, deeply ensconced in contingency, whereas ritual practice is relatively disembedded from a 'situation of transaction which flows from one agent to another, exactly as spoken language is caught in the process of interlocution' (Ricoeur 1981:203). This distanciation of ritual from contingency allows ritual to create its own world in a way similar to the world created by a text. This imaginative world of ritual, inhabited by gods, goddesses, ancestors, spirits, demons, as well as various classes of humans, is not to be thought of as a reflection of the everyday world or as embodying the fears, wishes, and fancies of the denizens of everyday life; rather, in the same manner that writing fixes the evanescent speech act by capturing what can be identified and re-identified (Ricoeur 1981:205), ritual captures what can be identified and re-identified in social practice; the 'said' and 'done' of social practice, to use and extend

Ricoeur's expression. The informal logic of everyday practice becomes in ritual a highly formalized, highly patterned logic, but in both cases we are dealing with people's practices, only the styles differ. Everyday practice is metamorphized by the (collective) imaginative variations which ritual carries out on the everyday and the common. This transformation is able to bring out more clearly the structure of social practice. Ritual is to the everyday flow of interaction what literature is to the flow of speech acts in a dialogical situation.

The highly patterned nature of ritual makes it more memorable. Even though I was able to personally observe only one ritual of the devadasis—when they participated in 1977 in the twelve yearly festival of Naba Kalebara (The New Body)—they and others were able to describe for me what else they used to do in that and other festivals. The festivals had been altered by the abandonment of most of the devadasis' rituals; an obvious case of ritual's embededness in historical contingency. However, the devadasis had in their lifetime fully participated, and due to the fixity and highly patterned form of the rituals, they and other participants and observers could describe for me what had disappeared. The reconstruction of the rituals as they had been is akin to establishing a critical edition of a text. I collected descriptions of rituals from as many participants and observers as possible and checked them against each other. What made the enterprise less speculative and more reliable is the fixity of ritual practice which enables recall and re-identification. People know how it is supposed to be. There are in Puri persons whose task is the supervision of the correct enactment of rituals; these persons often have in their possession ritual texts which have fixed in writing the sequence of actions and words of a ritual. Sometimes these texts are used during the performance of a particular ritual, as an aid to memory. One of the rituals I discuss is entirely based on information from such a text.

Formal rituals are by no means the only kind of practice I enquired about. I also attempted to reconstruct the more informal practices of the everyday life of the devadasis as it used to be before most of them abandoned their tradition. Kinship practices, life-cycle ceremonies, ancestor worship and sexuality are some of the less formal practices I discuss. Even though the book starts with these under the general heading of 'The devadasis in society', my journey to understanding started with the largest, most complex of the yearly festivals, *Ratha Yātrā* (the Car Festival). The beginning of insight came very late, during the second period of fieldwork from June to August 1977

when I witnessed that festival for the second time. I was able to observe *Ratha Yātrā* three times altogether, one of these being its enlarged twelve yearly version of Naba Kalebara. Perhaps because it is the festival I was able to observe most fully and most often, and because it is the most comprehensive of all the rituals in which the largest number of temple servants and other persons participate, it was through *Ratha Yātrā* that I began discerning some logic in all the practices I had seen and heard about. The insight I gained while watching *Ratha Yātrā* in 1977 illuminated all the other practices about which I had been in confused obscurity for so long. The book, however, reverses this sequence and leaves *Ratha Yātrā* for the end, as a culminating finale.

An important part of the practices of the devadasis and other people in Puri are the stories they tell. I have recorded many stories but have not restricted myself to myths told to me. I have felt free to use myths which were not told to me while I was in Puri. The rationale for such a procedure is that such myths could illuminate a particular aspect of the ethnography in a most helpful way. I have restricted myself to myths which are found in well-known texts such as the epics and the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* which have been written in Oriya, and one can fairly safely presume that they belong to the cultural baggage of the inhabitants of such a literate town as Puri. Such texts furthermore are told on the occasion of various festivals in the temple compound or around the temple and thus their knowledge is by no means restricted to the literate public. My feeling is that during a limited period of fieldwork it is unlikely that an ethnographer will be told all the relevant stories that some or all of his/her interlocutors might know. Thus I have felt that to restrict myself strictly to those myths that were told to me would be narrowly empirical and would rob me of a valuable source of insights.

The Devadasis and their Rituals

Before embarking on the details of the practices of the devadasis, a brief introduction to the institution and the light it throws on such topics as the ideology of the feminine, kingship, and power is in order.

The institution of women dancers in temples used to be a pan-Indian phenomenon (Basham 1959:185) which survived only in a few places, Orissa being one of them. The temple of Jagannātha in Puri is

a large complex containing the main temple, built in the twelfth century AD, one of the landmarks of Hindu medieval architecture. Besides the main temple there are many secondary smaller temples as well as a vast kitchen all enclosed in a double boundary wall. Close to 1,500 persons have some ritual duties in this temple, all of whom are males except for the small group of devadasis. The women ritual specialists dance and sing in the temple on a daily basis as well as participate in several calendrical festivals. The devadasis have an important role to play in *Ratha Jātrā*, which attracts to the small town of Puri (with a population of around 70,000) several hundred thousand pilgrims.

The devadasis are a very specialized, unusual group of women. They do not marry any mortal men and their dedication to temple service is regarded as constituting a marriage with the main deity, Jagannātha, a form of Viṣṇu. The devadasis are also called by words which can be translated as 'courtesan' or 'prostitute'. They are the only women who participate in the rituals and festivals of Puri as ritual specialists.

The cult of Jagannātha is inseparably linked with Orissan history and is the hub of Orissan culture. The daily ritual in the temple as well as the many calendrical festivals, especially the Car Festival, constitute for the Oriya people some of their major cultural performances.

The devadasis are called the 'auspicious women' (*mangaḷa nārī*) and they are the ones who sing the 'auspicious songs' (*mangaḷa gīta*). However they are also never allowed into the inner sanctum of the temple even though not only all the other ritual specialists but also the public at large is allowed into it at certain times of the day. This prohibition turns out to be linked with the devadasis' status as courtesans and the impurity of sex. This tension between the auspiciousness and the impurity of the devadasis is the pivotal focus of this work. The cultural meanings of the terms translated as 'auspicious' (*mangaḷa, śubha*) and their complementary opposites translated as 'inauspicious' (*amangaḷa, aśubha*) were totally opaque to me at the beginning of my research since they have not received the intensive scrutiny in the anthropological literature that the concepts of pure and impure have received. The meanings of auspiciousness and inauspiciousness reveal themselves through the practices, often reconstructed, of the devadasis. What emerges rather quickly is that the categories of auspicious and inauspicious do not correspond to those

of pure and impure. For example birth entails impurity for the mother as well as for a wider kin group but it is an auspicious event. Similarly at puberty a girl is impure but the ceremony performed for her is termed auspicious. A similar disparity holds true of menstrual blood which is highly polluting but at the same time a source of auspiciousness since a woman who does not menstruate is considered very inauspicious.[9]

Women are the harbingers of auspiciousness, a state which unlike purity does not speak of status or moral uprightness but of well-being and health or more generally of all that creates, promotes, and maintains life.

The disjunction between status and auspiciousness expresses itself in the devadasis seen as a social group. These women represent auspiciousness *par excellence*. They are not married and they are recruited from many castes. Once they become devadasis they are of one kind and as a group they are classified simply as devadasis who are said to have no rank or caste status, except that of women-kind (*strī jāti*). They are likened to the category of *baiṣṇab*, a Vaishnavite renouncer who has left caste and family in single-minded pursuit of devotion to God.

In the chapter on kinship, the evidence points unavoidably towards the fact that rank is passed on through the male and not the female. It would seem that the bilaterality which caste endogamy appears necessarily to entail has to be thought of in terms different from those of bilaterally inherited rank.

Status seems to be associated on the whole with masculinity, and auspiciousness on the whole with femininity, the two intimately intermingling in marriage. The case of the devadasis who do not marry offers an ideal case study for the understanding of auspiciousness since it is here not intermingled with status. As Dumont in *Homo Hierarchicus* (1970) has shown, purity and impurity underlie the hierarchy of caste. Thus the disjunction between auspiciousness and status predictably correlates with the disjunction between auspiciousness and purity which is repeatedly evidenced in this work. The maleness of hierarchy and of status is a rather inescapable fact when one peruses the sacred law literature (*Dharmaśāstra*) of India. There the blanket term women is used regardless of the status of the women who are classified into the lowest (*śūdra*) group whereas men are classified with great care into various ranked categories.

The maleness of purity can perhaps be seen reflected in the term

used for 'pure spirit', namely *puruṣa*, a word which can also have the meaning of a 'male person'. John Carman has suggested (personal communication) that to the two oppositions auspicious/inauspicious and pure/impure, one must add a third opposition: that between materiality (*prakṛti*) and pure spirit (*puruṣa*). Pure spirit refers to the value pursued by or characteristic of the renouncer (*sannyāsī*), the seeker of salvation. This person is a man and he cannot have a wife. He is an ascetic. A woman cannot become a renouncer, a seeker of salvation but must first be reborn as a man before she can undertake that quest, since the stage of the renouncer is only open to twice-born men (Manu VI:37, 40); women being all *śūdras* are only once-born.

Thus in the renouncer one has the counterpart to the devadasi. A man not related to a woman and who by his ascetic practices removes himself as much as possible from well-being, plenty of food, pleasure, all those things evoked by the word auspicious. This opposition in fact finds expression in mythic form in the many stories of the seduction of ascetics by courtesans, stories which are discussed later on in the book.

In these stories the courtesans are almost invariably sent to the forest, where the ascetic dwells, by a king. The courtesans are the instruments of the king who achieves his aim through them. His aim is always to end the drought plaguing his realm and bring on the life-sustaining rains. In Puri too the devadasis are closely linked to the king. They have ritual duties in the palace as well as in the temple and their morning ritual in the temple is called a 'royal offering'. It takes place in the presence of the preceptor of the king, a high brahmin, who has no other ritual duties in the temple. Devadasis are also classed among several symbols of kingship. The nature of the symbolic link between the devadasi and the king—which is explored in Part II—revolves around the concept of auspiciousness (see Marglin 1981).

The category of the auspicious also reveals itself to be central to an understanding of those rituals of the devadasis which are claimed by sectarian religious traditions. The evening ritual in the temple has an Oriya Vaishnavite exegesis, a form of Bhakti devotionalism very close to the Bengali (*Gauḍiya*) form of Vaishnavism. The claim made in the present study is that an understanding of the cultural meanings of the categories of the auspicious and the inauspicious does throw a new, hopefully insightful, light on this particular sectarian tradition.

The morning ritual of the devadasis is given by *śāktas*, an interpretation which places it in their tradition, according to which that ritual can only be properly understood as the non-secret form of another secret ritual. This secret ritual is interpreted on the basis of the ritual text used by the ritual specialist to perform it, as well as on interpretations given by that ritual specialist. It is a local variant of a fairly well-known ritual (commonly referred to as the 5 m's) which has been studied by several (male) scholars. My interpretation differs rather markedly from theirs, principally in arguing that to try to understand this ritual as a reversal of the values of purity renders many of its features problematical, whereas an interpretation of it in the light of the categories of the auspicious and the inauspicious is more powerful. More powerful in the sense that it 'opens' the ritual more than other interpretations do, and makes more of its features intelligible to us.

In both these traditions women have the same access to ultimate religious goals as men do, whereas in more classical formulations of the salvation quest, women must first be reborn as men before they can hope to undertake that quest.

Auspiciousness and inauspiciousness speak of fertility, birth, growth, decay and death. These are processes which unfold in time. They are the manifestations of a certain type of power which in this work is identified with the word *śakti*. *Śakti* is essentially a female power, engendering both life and death in its temporal unfolding. Thus the opposition auspicious/inauspicious is logically of a different sort than the pure/impure one. The auspicious transforms itself into the inauspicious and vice versa. For example certain ceremonies such as offerings to the ancestors are said to be both auspicious and inauspicious or to be inauspicious but carried out in order to obtain auspiciousness. Similarly some goddesses are said to both bring on disease as well as protect from disease or remove disease. The opposition auspicious/inauspicious can be expressed in unitary categories such as *śakti* and 'time'. All this does not hold true for the pure/impure opposition. The pure/impure principle speaks of order and stasis whereas auspiciousness and inauspiciousness speak of movement and transformations.

Part I

THE DEVADASIS IN SOCIETY

CHAPTER 1

Puri Encounters

The principal aim of this chapter is to introduce my main informants and give a sense of the situation I faced in the field.

In the year 1975–6 when I did the bulk of my research (I returned to Puri from June to August of 1977, for a month in December–January 1978–9 and in June and July 1981) there were only nine women who were devadasis, ranging in age from thirty-five to seventy. Only four of those women still participated in some rituals, and only one of these four still performed the daily ritual in the temple. The 1955 state government temple census reports thirty devadasis. Some of these have died and some others have since married. All the daughters of the present devadasis have married. In the past the marriage of a devadasi, that is a girl born to that group or adopted into it and dedicated pre-pubertally to temple service, could take place only with special permission from the king which happened infrequently. Thus the marriage of all the daughters of the present generation of devadasis marks the end of that tradition.

The nine devadasis, their brothers, brothers' wives, sons and daughters, the devadasis' daughters and their husbands and children all contributed to my understanding of some aspects of their tradition. I spoke to them on many occasions and spent time in their homes. But among this group of people four personalities emerged, or rather quickly imposed themselves, as being both more knowledgeable and willing to share their knowledge with me than the others. These were four devadasis who became not only my teachers but close friends whom I saw almost daily.

In order to understand the practices of the devadasis, I had to place them in the overall context of the temple and the palace. There again I gathered information from many persons, most of whom are temple servants. Some of these persons I visited often in their homes and others I more casually questioned on the occasion of the many festivals I attended in Puri. Among this latter group, two personalities

assumed central importance in my journey towards insight. One of them was (he has since passed away) a brahmin temple servant in whose home I spent much time. The other is a learned brahmin of the lineage of the preceptors of the king (*rājaguru*). He was, until the state's take-over of the management, the supervisor of rituals in the temple.

These six persons were very closely associated with my life in Puri, and because of their importance to this study I wish to write about them and my relationship with them in some detail. However, before doing so I would like to briefly introduce three more persons whose contribution to this work is also significant but with whom I had a less intimate and sustained relationship. One of them also belongs to a lineage of preceptors of the king (there used to be four such lineages and now only two remain). This man is the *purohita* (family priest) of the palace and he—along with the other *rājaguru*—provided me with much information about palace organization, palace life-cycle ceremonies and royal festivals. Another person is Pandit Sadasiva Ratha Sharma, a learned man of Puri, who is not a temple servant but whose whole life is centered around it. Pandit Ratha Sharma is already known to Western scholars through his publications written jointly with Alice Boner on the Konarak Temple.[1] I spent many hours in Pandit Ratha Sharma's house taking down under his dictation the transliteration and translation of a palm-leaf manuscript written by a devadasi which is in his possession.

The third person is a woman who belonged to the group of women attached to the palace, the palace equivalent of the devadasis who are affiliated to the temple. Such women are known as *deis*. The devadasis have ritual duties both in the temple and in the palace whereas the *deis* have ritual duties only in the palace. The *deis*, like the devadasis, did not reside permanently in the palace. They had their own houses in the town. However, this *dei* told me that while she was the king's mistress, (from whom she had children) she lived at the palace. But both *deis* and devadasis normally reside in their own houses with their mothers, sisters, mother's brothers and the latters' wives and children. They could receive other men in their house. According to the *dei*, they had sexual relations mostly with temple brahmin servants and members of the royal entourage. In other words the *deis* as palace servants did not live in the palace and cannot be seen as forming the equivalent of a harem. They were not expected to bestow their favours exclusively on the king.

I met this *dei* only on the occasion of my third visit to Puri. The reason for such a late meeting is that till then the devadasis had always insisted that there were no *deis* left in Puri. Finally one of the devadasis said that such a woman did in fact exist, and gave me some indications as to her whereabouts in the town. This woman turned out to be both informative and lively. Her vivid recollections of her days as a palace servant provided me with a wealth of information, mostly concerning palace life-cycle ceremonies.

The reluctance of the devadasis to put me in touch with the *dei* requires some elucidation. I find it necessary at this point to comment on the attitudes I encountered when I first arrived in Puri. The devadasi I first contacted, namely Brundabati, was unwilling to introduce me to the other devadasis and I finally found them myself through the help of my research assistant and collaborator, P. C. Mishra, and some temple brahmin servants. Even after a year of fieldwork the reluctance of all the devadasis to admit that there was a *dei* living in Puri is a measure of the devadasis' unease about their relationship to the king and the palace on the one hand, and about their traditional role on the other.

The mid-fifties marked the transfer of the management of the temple from the king to the state government. The period also coincided with the revival of the form of dance which the devadasis performed in the temple. Devadasis were excluded from the discussions on the revival of the dance, a discussion that took form as a series of seminars organized to codify the dance and form a repertoire. Previously this form of dance, named Oḍissi by the participants in the seminar (the devadasis themselves call it simply 'dance' [*nāca*]; the term Oḍissi is also used for the form of music from Orissa), was not known outside of Orissa and had not been presented on the stage of the modern theatre. One of the foremost participants in the seminars on the revival of the dance is a prominent man of letters, Sri Kalicharan Patnaik, whose long standing interest in Oriya music, literature, and arts is well known in Orissa, and who has collected a large library of palm-leaf manuscripts on those topics as well as on the dance. Sri Kalicharan Patnaik does not belong to the traditional performers of either Oriya music or dance. He is part of the Orissan intelligensia whose life-long endeavour has been the 'regaining of "Orissa's" cultural heritage' (K. C. Patnaik 1966:7). Another participant in those seminars was Direndra Nath Patnaik, secretary of the Orissa Sangeet Natak Akademi. This academy of music and dance is a

government organization whose central office is in New Delhi. Like Kalicharan Patnaik, Direndra Nath Patnaik is not a traditional performer. The other members of the seminars were the male traditional performers and teachers of the dance. The dance was not only performed by the women in the temple but also by young men, dressed as women, outside of the temple. These young men performed until the age of eighteen or so and then became musicians and/or teachers of the dance. This tradition is said to have emerged in the sixteenth century as a result of the influence of Caitanya, the Vaishnavite saint-reformer, who came to Puri at the turn of this century and promulgated what is known as *sakhī-bhāva*, the emotion of the female devotee towards Lord Krishna, as the model for both male and female devotees.

The male performers have become teachers in the newly created schools of music and dance in the cities of Orissa. They were not attached either to the palace or the temple and were much more oriented towards entertainment. They did perform in conjunction with certain festivals but also toured the villages as members of what were called 'opera parties' who performed for the entertainment of villagers. The form of the dance is very close to that of the devadasis but the social and ritual context of the male performers and of the devadasis is different. In terms of the Oriyas' sense of history, these men are relative late comers.

The seminars on Oḍissi dance were intended to establish Oḍissi as a form of classical dance to stand along with four other regional styles which had already been pronounced by the National Academy of Music and Dance to be classical styles, namely Bharat Natyam from Tamil Nadu, Kathakali from Kerala, Kathak from the North and Manipuri from Manipur. They were successful in this endeavour and Oḍissi is now classified as a classical form and performed widely on the stage in India. The national academy gave the first prize for Oḍissi in 1966 to one of the prominent performers and teachers, a member of the 1950's seminars.

The transformation of Oḍissi from a regional traditional form of dance to a nationally recognized 'classical' form of dance, a transformation which took place for the other regional styles as well but some two decades earlier, also meant the creation of a new ideological framework for the dance, one that fitted the new national consciousness of the educated elite. That consciousness made it impossible for the revivalists to invite the devadasis to participate in the seminars which took place in the 1950s to establish Oḍissi as a classical form of dance.

The view of the devadasis as morally degenerate women, and of the royal courts and the kings as the instruments of this degeneration solved a contradiction for the nationalist elite who were concerned with the 'revival' of Indian arts, a contradiction created as a result of the contact with the West. The attitude of the revivalists in Orissa has had a definite effect on the devadasis of Puri. The devadasis are keenly aware of the moral judgement passed on them and expected such a judgement on my part since I was associated with the revivalists. In the late 1960s I had visited Orissa as a guest of the state government to perform in the capital. At that time I met Direndra Nath Patnaik who included my photograph, as one of the two foreign exponents of Oḍissi, in his book. The book was known to one of the devadasis. However, I suspect that even without such a direct association with the revivalists their attitude towards a foreigner would have been the same.

After the take-over of the administration of the temple by the state government in 1955, the devadasis turned to the State Academy of Music and Dance to replace the traditional patronage which they had received from the king. They applied for grants to establish a school of dance and music so that they could continue to train young girls who would follow the tradition. Their requests were repeatedly denied. They have reacted—not uniformly and not with the same consistency—to the new situation by creating an image in conformity with the revivalists' view of their tradition. In other words, some of them started out by completely denying their status as courtesans as well as their ties with the palace. This attitude is what made them reluctant to introduce me to other devadasis and to the *deis*, for the leading exponent of such a revisionist view could not be sure of the information I would receive from other members of the group and in particular from the *deis* who form a separate group and over whom therefore she had no control.

With the exception of one devadasi, who for reasons I will presently elucidate could not repudiate her revisionist position, all the other devadasis little by little were less and less reluctant to speak candidly about their lives, the myths associated with their tradition and their role in royal festivals. Growing trust and the recognition that I did not pass moral judgement on them finally led one of them on the occasion of my third visit to put me in touch with the one *dei* remaining in Puri who was willing to speak about her tradition.

In order to introduce these main informants, there follows a brief life sketch of each of them. With the object of protecting their

identities I have given them pseudonyms, except in the case of my assistant, my collaborator, and the son-in-law of one of the devadasis, who is a well-known teacher of Oḍissi: Pankaj Charan Das.

The Devadasis

Amrapalli

Amrapalli is in her mid-sixties, of slender build and still strikingly beautiful. She lives in a fairly large two-storey house which she owns. It is situated in one of the lanes on the eastern side of the temple. She inhabits the top floor and rents out the first floor. One of her two spacious rooms, the one in which she entertains visitors, is furnished with carved wood Western-style furniture. She lives alone but is frequently visited for extended periods of time by her (deceased) brother's wife and the latter's nine children. Amrapalli has a leading position among the devadasis. This is due to several factors. She is very articulate and sophisticated. She is quite well-to-do and has wide-ranging social connections. She belongs to one of the Gauḍiya Vaishnavite monasteries (*matha*) in Puri where she is a regular and active participant in their daily worship, and attends occasional lectures by prominent saints of that order. Her four adopted daughters were the first to marry among devadasis' daughters. One married a lawyer of Puri. Although this was a 'love' marriage, Amrapalli provided her daughter with a handsome dowry by pledging some of her valuable jewelry.

Another daughter married a Puri brahmin. This of course was also a 'love' marriage which seems to have been resisted by the parents of the husband initially but they eventually accepted their daughter-in-law and now the couple and their children live with the husband's parents as is the custom. The third daughter married into a family belonging to the Khandayat caste, a fairly high caste. Amrapalli also arranged the marriage of her brother's eldest daughter to the adopted son of another devadasi, Brundabati.

One daughter was married within the group of devadasis to the natural son of a now-deceased devadasi. This man, Pankaj Charan Das, is the only member of the devadasi group who has become a teacher of Oḍissi dance. He has been teaching in the government school of music and dance in the capital and is the senior man among the male masters of Oḍissi. As such, and also because of the excellence of his art, he is respected by all those closely associated with the

dance. However, his social background has been a definite liability. The educated urban elite preferred to send their daughters for training in dance to other masters, those not associated with the devadasis. I have overheard people referring to this man derogatorily as 'the son of a prostitute'. Although he teaches in the capital he lives in Puri. He built a large house there on the outskirts of the old town. He has nine children; his eldest daughter took her BA in dance from the government school and is now a performer on the stage. The mother and father have not dedicated any of their four daughters to temple service for, as they explained to me, there is no future in it and it is very hard to make a living by it today. One of this couple's sons was adopted by another devadasi (Bisaka) who spends much time in their house.

Through this son-in-law, Amrapalli has been in touch with the revivalists. They are the ones who are in a position to give respectable and secure positions to her son-in-law whereas the king today has little or no power left and is impoverished. In any case he does not reside in Puri although he faithfully attends the major festival and enacts his ritual duties. For the rest of the year he practices law elsewhere.

Amrapalli was dedicated to temple service at the age of nine, by her devadasi mother whose natural daughter she is from a temple servant of the caste of scribes (*karaṇa*). She had a younger sister and a younger brother. When Amrapalli was sixteen her mother died and she found herself in charge of her younger siblings. She tells me that at that time she sought the help of an extremely wealthy businessman who had several houses in Puri as well as in Cuttack and Calcutta. This man took a great liking to Amrapalli and asked her to live with him. The house where Amrapalli lives today used to be a one-storey thatch cottage which her mother bought. But the property was mortgaged and it was with the help of her wealthy patron that Amrapalli re-appropriated this house and had it enlarged by adding a second storey to it. This man lavished wealth on her. About her relationship with him, Amrapalli, in a conversation which took place in 1977, said the following.

> People will not believe the friendship I had with this man. Everybody knows about it . . . . People say I was the concubine (*rakhitā*, literally 'the kept one') of this man . . . . But he was one of my gurus and always gave me good advice. Sometimes he also worshipped me like a devotee, giving me sandal paste and flowers and doing *pūjā* to me and then offering me new clothes . . . . He was a

very religious man, a great devotee (*bhakta*). He built a small shrine of Sāla Bega in Puri as well as a school and a hospital. Even if I have slipped, I controlled myself, I did not become blinded by sex (*kāmaṇḍa*). When one is in that state, a woman does not consider the status or quality of a man. But if the woman is judicious she considers everything carefully . . . . Having a human body it is impossible to stay away from sex. Take the example of the *apsarās* Menaka who loved Vishvamitra and gave birth to Shakuntala. But Menaka left Shakuntala in the jungle and went away. There was no attachment (*āsakti*). A devadasi should have no attachment (*āsakti*). A young woman will fulfil her desire of sex but she should have no attachment. When I was young so many *rājās*, *mahantas* (heads of monasteries) and rich people put their eyes on me. Even some committed suicide and some have taken *samnyāsa* (renounced the world), some tried to kill me in revenge but God saved me . . . .

I lived a happy life with that man. I got everything I had prayed for, a house, money, prestige. But I did not get any child, I was very careful about the matter.

When Amrapalli was twenty-four, this man died. During her relationship with him, Amrapalli was expelled from temple service by the king. This form of punishment called 'temple banishment' (*deuḷa bāsanda*) used to be meted out by the king for those temple servants who violated any rules. Amrapalli's explanation of that incident differs from that of the other devadasis. It was during the reign of Ramachandra Deva, the grandfather of the present king. According to Amrapalli the king called her to the palace and asked her to have sexual relations with him. She was very offended and said that if even the king behaves like that who will preserve the chastity of the devadasis? She refused his advances and the king ousted her from temple service. According to Amrapalli the punishment was to last one year. The incident is well known among temple servants and other inhabitants of Puri. According to other people the punishment lasted not one year but ten. Since Amrapalli says she stopped dancing in the temple in her early twenties, the ten-year banishment would explain such an early retirement. Other devadasis dance until their late thirties, even well into their forties. Since Amrapalli today still participates in some of the rituals associated with certain festivals, one can infer that she did not stop dancing because she was not willing to continue her ritual duties, but because she must have been obliged to. The other devadasis were very reluctant to discuss this incident. Amrapalli has set the tone among the devadasis and has been managing their public relations. But some of them ventured that

Amrapalli was banished by the king either because she married her daughters, thus violating the tradition that devadasis do not marry except by permission of the king, or because she went to live with her patron in Calcutta. Devadasis are not allowed by the king to leave Puri. In any case Amrapalli's shock at the king's request for her sexual favours is not recognized by the other devadasis as valid. Some of them said to me: 'The king is the living Viṣṇu, why should we refuse ourselves to him?' But Amrapalli told her version to many and in particular to a young writer who published the story. Amrapalli is by now committed to this version, a version which is in accordance with the revivalists' notion of the original chastity of the devadasis and their corruption under the influence of the kings.

Amrapalli only admitted to this one relationship with the wealthy businessman. And this she did only on the occasion of my second visit to Puri in 1977. During my first visit Amrapalli was very interested in my writing and then publishing her life-story. I too was attracted by such a project and we sat down together to implement it. The story that she gave me omitted all relationships with men and portrayed her life as that of a chaste Vaishnavite devotee. As our relationship developed and my research progressed, Amrapalli realized that I did not share the moral attitude of the revivalists, and also that I had contacted all the devadasis and had developed friendships with several temple servants. She became aware that I had learned a great deal. However her ties and commitment to the world of the revivalists are too strong and she cannot dissociate herself from these. In any case, given the moral climate today and the demise of kingship, it is very difficult if not impossible for the devadasis to re-establish a sense of worth and dignity within the traditional framework, not to speak of a viable economic position. Support can only come from the government, either through the Academy of Music and Dance or through the temple administration; neither has done anything concrete to help the tradition survive. Amrapalli is perspicacious enough to realize that contradicting the revivalists' view of their tradition can only further antagonize them, and because of her son-in-law's position she has to maintain a good relationship with the revivalists. In 1976 the academy held a seminar on Oḍissi and Amrapalli was for the first time asked to participate and speak about the jewelry which they used to wear when dancing. None of the other devadasis were invited. I myself have had occasion to witness the way in which the revivalists interact with the devadasis. During my fieldwork in Puri,

a member of the National Academy of Music and Dance from Delhi was visiting Puri, accompanying his wife—a performer of Bharat Natyam—on a concert tour. A concert was scheduled in Puri and a member of the Orissa academy had contacted Amrapalli and another devadasi, Brundabati, telling them that the person from Delhi wanted to interview them. A time and place was set for the meeting. The devadasis asked me to come with them. The three of us came at the appointed time and place and waited for two hours. No one came and no word was sent. The devadasis felt this was an insult. Later I met the person from Delhi and his wife at the concert where the devadasis had not been invited. The dancer was introduced by her husband who spoke about this great tradition and the women who had kept it alive, the devadasis. However, neither he nor his wife, nor the member of the Orissa academy met the devadasis on that occasion nor did they send any explanation or apology for the missed appointment.

Amrapalli is a devout Vaishnavite and has given me rich and full exegeses on the evening ritual, which unlike the morning ritual is predominantly Vaishnavite. Like all the devadasis, Amrapalli is literate and composes poetry and songs which she sings on the occasion of festivals. She is the most worldly and had all her daughters trained in music and dance by the leading musicians of Puri, who are brahmins associated with the temple. The literate tradition among the devadasis is ancient and contrasts with the illiteracy of the temple servants' wives who have only recently begun to send their daughters to school.

Brundabati

Brundabati is the daughter of the brother of a devadasi. She lives in a cottage in a small dead end lane behind the western gate of the temple. She is in her mid-fifties. She lives with her brother's son whom she has adopted and his wife who is a daughter of Amrapalli's brother. While I was there, the young couple had their first baby, a boy. Brundabati's brother and his wife and two other sons, one of whom is married to the daughter of a brother of a devadasi, live three houses away in the same lane. Her brother, sister-in-law, nephew and niece often visit her. Brundabati used to live together with her brother but because of strained relations with her sister-in-law they separated a few years back and now live in distinct houses.

Brundabati's father died when she was eleven. She had not yet been dedicated at that time. Her widowed mother applied to the king to have her daughter dedicated. The king, in usual fashion. sent an order

to the temple servants inquiring whether the girl was fit for temple service. The response was that a widowed mother cannot sponsor the dedication of her daughter because the wives of the devadasis' brothers could not themselves be devadasis since devadasis cannot marry mortal men. So Brundabati's mother had her daughter adopted by another devadasi belonging to the same ritual division as her husband's sister, namely to the 'inner singers' (*bhitara gāuṇī*). So Brundabati was adopted by Devaki, another devadasi, who then successfully sponsored her dedication to temple service. She began dancing during the morning ritual. After her puberty, which took place when she was sixteen, she started participating in the evening ritual.

Brundabati recalls that right after her father's death and before her dedication, times were hard for her mother and brother. But afterwards their life improved since then she could go along with other devadasis, accompanied by her brother, to pilgrim houses to sing. The pilgrims from all parts of India requested the visit of the devadasis to their lodging houses. They did *pūjā* with flowers and sandal paste to the devadasis, washed their feet and gave them money. From these visits Brundabati and her brother brought back money. She could receive anything between 15 and 100 rupees. According to Brundabati and the other devadasis, pilgrims have stopped calling them in the last ten to fifteen years.

She also used to go to the king's palace accompanied by a brahmin temple servant. Her voice was lovely and the king was pleased to hear her singing.

At the time when she started participating in the evening ritual there were four devadasis and thus she had to perform only once every four days. Gradually the older devadasis got sick and some died. Nowadays Brundabati is the only one who still performs the daily evening ritual. No one performs the morning dance any longer. For this she receives from the temple administration 30 rupees a month. Such a meagre sum is of course totally inadequate to support her. Brundabati has pawned her jewelry and bought land. She also bought the house adjacent to her own and rents it out.

Brundabati adopted a daughter to continue her tradition. The baby was four months old when she was adopted. She received her from parents who had made a promise to Jagannātha that if their child would recover from sickness they would dedicate their next baby girl to temple service. Brundabati dedicated her daughter when she was ten. She had taught her music and dance and the girl was doing her ritual service as well as going to school. After completing her high

school matriculation, she told her mother that she was ashamed to do the ritual and so she stopped. She went on to study to become a nurse. Six months after completing her training she married a brahmin from another town.

Brundabati then adopted another girl of eight, and dedicated her. She did the ritual until the age of fifteen. But after her puberty she got married. Six months later she became a widow and came back to Brundabati. But having been married she could not resume temple service; so Brundabati took her back to her natural parents and arranged for another marriage for her. Brundabati would not give me any more information about those marriages from which I assume that they were not very prestigious, unlike the marriages of two of Amrapalli's daughters.

Brundabati often visits her adoptive mother, devadasi Devaki who lives not far from Brundabati, also on the western side of the temple. Devaki is old, losing her eyesight and very weak. She lives with her natural daughter Bhanumati who was dedicated to temple service but who stopped doing the ritual when she was fifteen. Bhanumati became a nurse, remaining unmarried, and is presently working in the municipal hospital. She has a natural son for whom she arranged a marriage with a woman from the group of devadasis of a goddess temple in a town north-west of Puri. Brundabati considers such a marriage disgraceful: 'We are ashamed of this marriage. We do not have marriage ties with devadasi families from other places. Today there is no value placed on caste.'

In her bedroom, which is where Brundabati receives visitors, she keeps a framed photograph prominently displayed near her worship shelf. In this picture Brundabati is sitting next to a man, both posing stiffly for the camera. When I felt comfortable enough with Brundabati in whose house I came almost daily for dance lessons, I asked her who this was. She laughed and said it was a 'friend'. Brundabati's manner of speaking is rather brusque but affectionate. She takes things in hand, being a woman of action rather than words. I could not press her on the subject. However it is well known that this man is a businessman of Puri with whom she has had a sustained relationship for many years. Bhanumati, Brundabati's adoptive mother's daughter, spoke of this relationship in the following terms: 'Brundabati is married and not married.' The man was identified for me by name and his shop pointed out. Brundabati never volunteered any information on this relationship nor did she allow me to question her.

Brundabati and I developed a very affectionate relationship. She

described for me all the rituals in which she participates and had participated and told me many stories related to their tradition. But Brundabati never engaged in gossip and would not discuss other devadasis' lives. She saw the demise of her tradition unsentimentally saying that things wax and wane and perhaps in some future time this tradition would wax great again.

Radha

I was introduced to Radha by Sahasrakhyi, my temple brahmin friend. Radha is in her mid-forties and lives in the main lane leading from the eastern gate of the temple, just across the street from Sahasrakhyi. She lives in the house of a family of brahmin temple servants. This is an unusual situation and Radha is the only devadasi who does not reside in her own house. She told me that she rents a small room somewhere else where she gives music lessons to children. However, she would not take me there. The family with whom she lives is that of the brother of her now deceased lover, comprising her lover's younger brother, his wife and their unmarried children. Radha is a very unusual person. Unlike any other devadasi, she seemed to be minimally affected by a feeling of shame towards her tradition. She said to me: 'Why should I hide these things? It is a tradition among us to keep relations with the brahmin temple servants and with the king.' Radha is very lively; she laughs and cries easily and is totally uninhibited. I spent much time with her and her brahmin family, sitting in a small room with the women and children who address Radha as 'elder mother', the usual term of address for the father's elder brother's wife.

Radha also came very often to my house and spoke freely and at length on all aspects of their tradition and on her life and other devadasis' lives. In Puri, I had rented an apartment on the outskirts of the old town, near the beach. Having my own residence proved indispensable since many of my informants would not talk of certain topics in their own house, but would do so in my house. Radha had had some disagreement with Amrapalli who is her mother's sister. Radha told me that she (Radha) was the natural daughter of a wealthy, high caste family. But when she was very small, her mother became a widow and for some reason was left destitute. She came to Puri and gave her daughter for adoption to a devadasi. This devadasi died when Radha was eleven. She was then taken in by Amrapalli and remained with her for some years. However due to some disagreement, Radha left Amrapalli's household and went to live with a

brahmin temple servant. Her mother's house was claimed by another devadasi, Bisaka, and Radha feels that she was cheated out of her rightful inheritance. Radha was invited by Bisaka when the latter adopted one of the sons of Amrapalli's son-in-law, Pankaj Charan Das. Radha reacted in the following manner to the invitation: 'Now you want to show me your golden ornaments and your son of whom I disapprove? In our tradition we never adopt sons, we adopt daughters. Please adopt a girl to continue the ritual and I will live with you and share the expenses with you.' Bisaka refused. What characterizes Radha is her refusal to adapt to the changing times and her tenacious and straightforward adherence to her tradition. It is evident that Radha and Amrapalli could only clash, since the latter was the prime mover in changing the devadasis' tradition by marrying her daughters and projecting a different image.

When Amrapalli heard that I had met Radha, she warned me against anything that Radha might tell me and advised me to disregard it since Radha was a bit touched. Radha was aware of this attitude and told me: 'They say I am crazy. But I am not. When I had my puberty I exchanged garlands with this *paṇḍā* in whose brother's house I live and I have lived in the boundaries of that relationship always. It is a custom for us to keep a relationship with a temple servant but not with outsiders. The other devadasis have not done that. By having relationships with many men these devadasis have become rich.'

Radha's lover was a widower without children and he did not remarry because she asked him not to. They adopted one of the sons of his younger brother. This boy, who is now around ten, lives with his mother and also with Radha since she lives in that house. Radha, however, is totally dependent on this family and has not accumulated any property of her own. She tells me that her adopted son may or may not look after her in her old age. He is not obligated to do so and if he does so, it will be out of affection. She would very much like to adopt a girl to continue the tradition but she cannot, for she would be unable to support her. I went with her to the temple administrator to make a plea to allocate some funds which would enable her to adopt a daughter and continue the tradition. Unfortunately the administrator was not at all interested. Radha is the only devadasi genuinely interested in adopting a girl. She bemoans the fact that Amrapalli's son-in-law, Pankaj Charan Das who has four daughters, is not giving any of them for adoption to a devadasi who would dedicate her. Radha refuses to recognize the fact that all the daughters of the present devadasis who were dedicated pre-pubertally and did some

years of service in the temple, have all felt 'ashamed' and opted to marry or to have a job and discontinue the tradition. Thus the adoption of boys has become a necessity because a married daughter cannot look after her mother in old age.

Radha is also the only devadasi who was willing to dance for me in my house and have me film her. The others always insisted that this should not be done outside a ritual setting. Some, however, softened, but were still reluctant because the proper jewelry is no longer available since they have all pawned their jewelry. Radha decorated herself with flower garlands when she danced for me.

It was Radha who on the occasion of my third visit finally told me that there was one *dei* left in Puri and gave me enough indications of her whereabouts so that with the help of my collaborator I was able to locate her.

According to Radha, the devadasis must have their first sexual relation with the king. She bases this assertion on her own experience which I relate in chapter two. Brundabati, however, told me that the king has the option of having sexual relations first with the young devadasi just after her puberty but that he is not obliged to do so. This view was confirmed by the two *rājagurus*. What Radha emphasized repeatedly is that the devadasis must—she used the term *niam*, meaning rule—have at least one sexual relationship with a brahmin temple servant.

Radha belongs to the 'outside singers' (*bāhāra gāuṇī*) ritual division. To her belongs, by inheritance, a certain ritual which takes place on the occasion of the festival of the birth of Krishna. She feels very proud of this. However since the demise of the king it has become very hard for her to keep it up, due to the expenses involved. She dresses up at that time as Yasoda, Krishna's foster mother. For this she needs to purchase several articles such as flowers and food which she must bring to the brahmin who plays the role of Nanda, Krishna's foster father. Those expenses used to be borne by the king. The temple administration sometimes gives her some money and sometimes nothing at all, depending on the attitude of the current temple administrator toward the devadasis. In any case the money is never sufficient. But Radha always manages and borrows money if she has to. She comments: 'I am trying my best to keep this ritual going because it is very important and the people want it to be continued.' I describe the ritual in Chapter 7. The role of the other wife of Nanda, Rohini, belonged to another devadasi, Tilottama. But several years back Tilottama refused to continue this ritual. Tilottama is the only

devadasi whom I was unable to see. I came to her house but was not allowed to enter and meet her. I only met one of her three sons, who has the ritual service of playing the drum to accompany the dance of the devadasis.

The other devadasis explained to me that Tilottama married her three sons in good families not from Puri and to arrange such marriages hid the fact that she is a devadasi. None of the devadasis were invited to the wedding and this resulted in Tilottama being expelled from their group. Tilottama's son who is the drummer was adopted by Tilottama's brother and in speaking to me portrayed himself as the natural son of his adoptive father (who was married) and never mentioned his father's sister. He never took me to his house and was only willing to talk to me in my own house. So now the role of Rohini is taken by Bisaka.

I am afraid that Radha's wish to adopt a girl, even if it could be implemented, would not result in the continuation of the tradition. The daughters of the devadasis are the first generation of devadasis who were sent to school. The eldest is Amrapalli's daughter who is now forty-seven. She was going to school in the thirties and forties. The school environment is one major cause of the feeling of shame (*lāja*) which these daughters all came to have towards their tradition. I have heard male temple servants voice the opinion that they do not consider schooling helpful for their sons if these are going to continue in their traditional role. Schooling is indispensable for joining the 'modern' sector and several temple servants' sons have become doctors, lawyers and engineers. But if they intend to continue in their traditional role as ritual specialists, school is seen more as a liability than a help.

Lalita

Lalita is the youngest devadasi; she is in her mid-thirties. She lives alone, not far from Brundabati, behind the western gate of the temple in a fairly large two-storey house. She belongs to the same ritual division as Brundabati but does not continue the ritual. Although she is the best singer among the devadasis and I recorded (in her house) many of her songs, she does not sing in the temple anymore. When I asked her why she did not continue the ritual she said, 'I feel shame. All my friends either got married or took up jobs. My closest friend Bhanumati left temple service and I do not feel like continuing.' As Lalita is not married and does not have a job, she feels isolated since she has no contemporaries who continue the ritual. Brundabati

belongs to an older generation and continues the ritual from a deep feeling of faithfulness and commitment in the face of all changes. Lalita says that nowadays people just think of the devadasis as prostitutes and not as the wives of Jagannātha, and she adds, 'formerly the pilgrims used to give gifts such as money, ornaments, and saris while we were dancing but nowadays they don't give anything. We also used to have lands given by the king, but these lands were taken away so now we don't have any land.' She was unable though to tell me when this happened. Lalita is by nature shy and retiring and has none of the verve and energy of Brundabati. Lalita was adopted by a devadasi who died recently. Her mother also adopted two other girls, one of whom has since died and the other has left with a man and has not been heard of since. Lalita has adopted one of the sons of her brother who seems to divide his time between his parents' house and Lalita's house. Her brother works in the police department and seems to be fairly well off. He helps support his sister but Lalita must have other sources of income, most likely from other men with whom she has relationships, but it was impossible to question her on the subject.

Lalita, as a junior devadasi, was constantly worried about what the elders, particularly Amrapalli and Brundabati, would say. At the beginning when I asked her questions she always used to refer me to them, saying that I must ask them. However, slowly she relaxed and felt freer to talk to me and sing songs for me.

Lalita gave me the name and the address of another devadasi, Urvasi, who lives near her brother. Urvasi is in her late fifties and no one had mentioned her to me before. Lalita told me that Urvasi's mother, now dead, and all the people in her house, that is her daughter Urvasi and Urvasi's daughter, were outcast by the devadasis, because Urvasi's daughter left the ritual and went into the theatre. The devadasis brought their complaint against this family to the king who upheld their verdict. Urvasi's mother appealed to the king but to no avail. Urvasi's daughter is the concubine of a man from whom she has had seven children; her two elder daughters have made a career in films and in the theatre. One of them had close ties with the household of my temple servant friend, Sahasrakhyi. She was the companion of one of his older brother's sons. The other devadasis refused to recognize her as one of them however, and never mentioned her and her relatives.

Urvasi lives next door to a couple—the man belongs to the devadasis' group. They have a daughter who was married to one of the sons of Brundabati's brother. Although the mother told me that

when she became pregnant, she had made a vow to Jagannātha to dedicate her daughter. However, when the daughter grew up, the devadasi system was finished and so the daughter was married off.

Lalita says that these intragroup marriages are the first ones. Some of these marriages occur even within the same lineage. This they are obliged to do because of the small number of persons in their group and the lack of a tradition of marrying daughters. Except for the 'love' marriages, all the other marriages have had to take place within the group where the number of available men is very small.

Others

Sahasrakhyi, Brahmin temple servant

Sahasrakhyi was a man (he has since died) in his mid-sixties, tall, handsome, and extroverted. Sahasrakhyi lived in the same lane as Radha, which is the main lane leading to the eastern gate of the temple. His household comprises his wife, a widow-concubine, two grown sons and three younger children. His two older daughters are married to temple servants and visit from time to time. His house adjoins and is connected to the house of his elder brother who lives with his wife, his widow-concubine, and two grown sons. Sahasrakhyi belongs to the ritual division of *simhāris* whose service consists of decorating the main images with clothes and flowers. Sahasrakhyi is also a 'pilgrim *paṇdās*'; that is, he is a guide for the pilgrims of a certain region of India. He conducts this business from an office located in a building near the temple, where he keeps the voluminous records of the names and genealogies of the pilgrims who come to him. He arranges for the pilgrims' lodgings and food while they are in Puri and takes them to all the sacred locations in the temple and the town. His sons help him in this enterprise and he also hires servants who receive the pilgrims from the station or the bus depot and who even travel to the pilgrims' home areas in an attempt to develop the pilgrim business.

Sahasrakhyi, in contrast to Trinayana, the *rājaguru*, was a man who loved women, music, dance and intrigues. He was frequently involved in fairly serious conflicts which perennially arise among the pilgrim *paṇdās*, mostly about alleged or actual 'stealing' of pilgrims from each other. Such conflicts often erupt into violence and many pilgrim *paṇdās* have in their hire strong men whose task is to beat up rival pilgrim *paṇdās* or their servants. One of Sahasrakhyi's sons was constantly involved in illicit affairs with women, drinking bouts, and fights.

Sahasrakhyi took me under his wing and introduced me to many temple servants. It is because of his kindness that I always had a place from where to view the many festivals in Puri especially the yearly Car festival which is so crowded that seats with a good view are at a great premium. On the occasions of the street festivals, he always arranged for the processions to pass in front of his house and stop there so that I could film the procession and talk to the participants.

Sahasrakhyi also arranged for me to visit his men's club, called *jāgāghara*-s, where women are excluded. There the young and not-so-young men of Puri, mostly temple servants, practice wrestling and other body-building arts. Sahasrakhyi's own household was often in turmoil, not only due to his son's escapades but also to the permanent conflict between his widow-concubine and his wife. Sahasrakhyi had formed a liaison with this widow before his marriage and when he married he kept her in his house. Although his elder brother has done the same thing, in that house the concubine and the wife get along very well. Both widows are brahmins. Sahasrakhyi's widow occupies a spacious room upstairs while his wife occupies a downstairs room. The two women cook separately. The widow is a very forceful and intelligent woman whereas the wife is timid and shy. The widow dominates the household where everyone, including Sahasrakhyi, stands in fear of her. Often things were so bad that Sahasrakhyi and his grown sons would not eat at home but have food purchased in the bazaar and sent to their office.

I talked to Sahasrakhyi either in his house or his office and sometimes at my house. The women in his household would never go outside and this holds true for all the women in temple servants' households. With the exception of the devadasis and old widows, the women of temple servants do not often go outside. When they do, it is to visit their natal households only. Little pre-pubertal girls are allowed to roam freely in the streets and are used by their mothers and older sisters to run errands and carry messages. However from the rooftops and the back entrances there is a lively socializing and gossiping going on between the women, since the houses are contiguous.

Sahasrakhyi was a delightful man, full of anecdotes about Puri, the temple and the devadasis. According to him and his brother, Amrapalli had many affairs with prominent men of Puri and they depicted to me vividly the lavish style in which some of her patrons kept her. She used to be driven in a car to the temple and was attended by several women servants.

Trinayana, rājaguru

Trinayana is a learned gentleman in his sixties. He has at once a gentle, understated, and refined bearing. He is a man of great learning, a traditional pandit and Sanskrit scholar who after the take-over of the temple administration by the state government, taught Sanskrit in the Sanskrit college in Puri. My relationship with Trinayana developed slowly, from early very formal meetings to lengthier and lengthier ones where I was privileged to learn an enormous amount from him. Trinayana is a *śākta*. Towards the latter part of my first visit Trinayana took a decision to share with me his knowledge of the secret rituals of his tradition. Evidently, he had known me long enough to satisfy himself that I was a serious scholar. Even so, I was still surprised that he was willing to share this esoteric knowledge with me. He expressed wistfully his feeling that nowadays interest in his tradition was waning. His sons are all studying in college and he fears that his tradition will soon disappear. It is perhaps out of a desire to keep this tradition alive, albeit transposed in the context of non-traditional scholarship, that he decided to divulge his knowledge.

Trinayana preferred to talk with me in my house because of the peaceful atmosphere, and so we could talk for hours at a time without being interrupted. My collaborator P. C. Mishra was a faithful attendant and helper. My knowledge of Oriya was not enough to follow the learned and esoteric discourse of Trinayana, and P. C. Mishra's help as a translator has been invaluable all along. I taped all our conversations and in the evenings, P. C. Mishra and I transcribed and translated the tapes.

In response to my keen interest and persistent questions Trinayana allowed my collaborator to copy the manuscript text of one of the central secret rituals. With Trinayana's assistance, P. C. Mishra translated the text which is full of specialized terms which were explained by Trinayana. I was also able to get another manuscript of the same ritual from another part of Orissa from Padmashri S. N. Rajaguru, the eminent epigraphist from Orissa and thus was able to compare the two versions. An analysis of this ritual is found in Chapter 8.

Before the take-over of the temple administration by the state government, Trinayana was the supervisor of rituals in the temple. In the traditional hierarchy, Trinayana's lineage stands at the apex. His lineage was founded in the 16th century by the king. In an unbroken tradition, the men in his lineage have been associated with the king.

Today Trinayana and other *rājagurus* perform all the 'installation' (*pratiṣṭhā*) ceremonies connected with the temple. They also perform the royal consecration rituals and their yearly re-enactment. Trinayana is also called to other towns in Orissa which have their own Jagannātha temple to perform these rituals. He also performs the secret *śākta* rituals at the time of certain festivals and also on the request of private parties for the accomplishment of certain wishes.

Trinayana lives a well regulated and rather ascetic life. His life-style is in rather stark contrast to that of Sahasrakhyi and this difference holds true in general between the learned non-temple-servant brahmins and the temple servants.

These sketches would not be complete without the mention of my research assistant and my collaborator. During my first visit to Puri, Puspita Patnaik (then she was unmarried and called Mohanty), a young woman in her early twenties with an MA in anthropology from Utkal University in Bubhaneswar, helped me in my research. She had just finished her MA and was residing with her parents, who are from Puri. At the beginning of my research she was particularly helpful since P. C. Mishra, a brahmin from Puri, was rather reluctant to visit the houses of the devadasis. His reluctance, I must add, is shared by many men, for they feel that their reputations might be compromised by doing so. Puspita became engaged and married towards the end of my first visit. P. C. Mishra remained with me during my three subsequent visits and continues to do research for me when I am in the States and we correspond regularly. He has long ago overcome his reluctance to visit the devadasis. He has been a most gifted, serious and hard working collaborator and my debt to him is great. Being an educated brahmin from Puri (he has an MA in education) he was in an ideal position to be a link between my research and the traditional persons connected with the temple. The temple of Jagannātha is closed to non-Hindus—except Buddhists and Jains—and without the mediation of P. C. Mishra it would have taken me much longer to be introduced and accepted in many traditional households. The help of both of them was of course indispensable in providing detailed accounts of rituals in the temple which I could not witness.

P. C. Mishra is not only a highly conscientious collaborator, but being a brahmin from Puri, he was also an invaluable informant. For me he has been not only a collaborator and a highly knowledgeable informant, but also a generous host, a very good friend, someone I am proud to call 'brother'.

CHAPTER 2

Kinship: Married Women and Devadasis

To fully understand the kinship practices of the devadasis, it is necessary to place them in a wider social context. The devadasis' kinship practices are highly unusual among Hindu women, essentially because they do not marry. The devadasis on the other hand are also considered in some ways to represent the married state *par excellence*. Being married to Lord Jagannātha and hence never becoming widows, they embody the auspiciousness of the married state. This auspiciousness they share with all non-widowed married women. So the devadasis both sharply contrast with other women as well as share with them some very important attribute, that of auspiciousness. I will therefore begin this chapter with a presentation of the kinship practices among the brahmin temple servants. I have chosen this group because it represents two-thirds of all temple servants and is the group with which the devadasis interact most frequently. The second part of the chapter focuses on the kinship practices of the devadasis.

Married Women

All the brahmin temple servants constitute one endogamous group. Although daughters can be married anywhere in that group—except in their father's clan (*kuḷa*)—the group is divided along ritual lines. There are about ten main ritual divisions among the brahmin servants (called *nijogas*),[1] and each of these is further divided along kinship principles into at least two clans. The reason for such a division was put to me in the following way by a *pūjā paṇḍā* (those who do the main offering):

> There used to be only six clans (*kuḷa*, *bangśa*). The king at the beginning said: 'You three will be *pūjā paṇḍā*, you two *suāra* and you *daitā*,' and gave them titles. It is by those titles that we know the clan. The king divided us and said

you will be one clan and you one clan because otherwise if there was birth or death pollution (*chutikā*, *mrutikā*) the worship would be stopped and so he divided them into separate clans.

This explanation refers to the fact that when someone is born or dies, all the members of his clan are polluted. In the case of a birth they are impure for a period of twelve days and in the case of a death they are impure for a period of ten days. During that time they cannot enter the temple. Thus to ensure continuity in the temple worship it is necessary that each of the ritual divisions have at least two clans. This rule does not apply to the *daitā* who are a group of ritual specialists said to be the descendants of the tribal chief from whom the cult of Jagannātha was originally received. Their duties cluster around the time of the yearly Car Festival (see Chapter 9). They have only one clan.

However in practice the clan—which as the quote above indicates is known by the title (called *gotra*)—is relevant only for purposes of marriages. One cannot marry one's daughter to someone having the same *gotra*, i.e. belonging to the same clan as oneself. The persons who are affected by death and birth pollution are a smaller group reckoned as including all relatives in the male line and their wives up to the seventh or more often the fifth generation. Such a group is called a *kuṭumba*.[2] The clan includes all the male descendants, and their wives, of the original founding ancestor called 'the original man' (*ādi puruṣa*).

From this rule of clan exogamy derives the fact that unmarried daughters belong to the clan of their father but upon marriage they leave their natal clan and are included in the clan of their husbands. In fact during the wedding there is a ritual called 'changing the clan' (*gotra paribārtana*) at which time the bride is given a new name by which she will be called in her new household.

In a household, that is the people living in one house and eating from the same kitchen, I have never seen more than three generations. In most cases a man will live with his married sons and their children and his unmarried daughters. As I mentioned earlier a household can also include a concubine of the head of the household as in the case of Sahasrakhyi and his brother. These brothers[3] were in their sixties and apparently (this is from gossip) had formed these liaisons even before their marriages. I have not done any survey of household membership and so cannot say how frequent such arrangements are, but what I can say is that they are certainly not regarded as reprehensible or

peculiar, and I was told that they were quite common. The wife and the concubine in one household get along very well and are always seen together and in the other household they don't get along at all.

These two brothers set up separate households at the time of their father's death. They told me that such behaviour was customary, whereas for married brothers to set up separate households while their father is still alive is not approved of and is taken as a sign of conflict between son and father. I had an opportunity to witness what happens when my collaborator set up a separate household with his wife and small son. This was the result of very strained relations between him and his parents and brothers and amounted to a public declaration of bad relations between them.

The members of a household are called a *paribāra* which I will translate as a 'family'. A family can be large and have a depth of three generations and several couples and their children in it or it can be small and consist of only a couple with or without children. The latter is more frequently the case since a man will want to marry his sons before he dies and usually by the time he dies the son(s) has children already. It is also possible for married sons not to leave the father's house at the time of his death if the mother is still alive. This was the case with the household of Sahasrakhyi. He died before his two grown sons were married. After they got married (which happened in 1978) they remained in their father's household with their widowed mother and also with the widow-concubine who has stayed on in spite of the death of the head of the household. I must mention that all the children of this man were from his wife. He has four sons and three daughters, the youngest being only five. His brother too had children only by his wife.

The members of a household—excepting concubines—and the members of a *kuṭumba* are all called 'relatives by blood' (*rakta samparka*). Such relatives are contrasted to the relatives one acquires through marriage. When a daughter marries, the relatives of her husband become 'relatives by marriage' (*baibāhita bandhu*, *bandhu* for short). For example the three married daughters of the wife of Radha's ex-lover's brother lived in three separate households which were all *bandhu* to the household of their father. And the same is true of the two married daughters of Sahasrakhyi. Thus through these two friends, there were five different households in which I was welcome.

Relatives by marriage are not affected by a birth or death among

'blood relatives' and this is true also for the married daughter. However, in spite of this, she is called a '*rakta samparka bandhu*'—which can be translated as 'a blood relative by marriage'—by her parents. To her father and mother she remains a blood relative although that blood bond has been altered since the daughter is not affected in the same way by a death or a birth in her natal household. As members of my friends' households explained to me, a daughter 'becomes happy' when a birth occurs in her father's *kuṭumba* and 'becomes sad' at the news of a death in that same group. The 'becoming sad' takes the following form: the daughter 'mourns' (*pāḷe*) which means she is so sad that for ten days she does not oil or comb her hair, does not dress in gay colours, does not eat fish or meat (Oriya brahmins eat fish and meat). This mourning does not mean that she is polluted. She can go to the temple and she is not untouchable.

The blood relation through the daughter continues to the next generation in a restricted sense. Her son will also be the same type of 'blood relative by marriage'. The explanation given to me about this appellation is that through marriage, specifically through sexual intercourse, the blood of the wife and the husband mix.

These special relationships are expressed in the custom of the sister's son offering oblations for his mother's brother (after the latter's death) at the time of the 'fortnight of the ancestors' (*pitru pakhya*), in the month of *āświn* (Sept.–Oct.). Offerings to the ancestors are done during the whole dark fortnight and on the last day (called *mahālayā*, colloquially *maulā*) the sister's son makes offerings to his mother's brother. The day is considered so important that it is a government holiday. It is believed that the mother's brother is extremely eager to receive the offering (called *piṇḍas*) of his sister's son and that this offering is more pleasing even than that of a son. The relationship between these two relatives is a very affectionate one.

The son-in-law can also offer oblation for his father-in-law if the latter has no son of his own. However the son of the son-in-law cannot offer oblation for his maternal grandfather. Thus the bond between parents and their married daughters and sons-in-law and between the mother's brother and the sister's son is not transmissible, it has no genealogical depth.

Thus what happens at marriage to a daughter is quite remarkable. By the ritual of 'changing her clan' she becomes a 'blood relative' of her husband's relatives. She will observe death and birth pollution for

the *kuṭumba* of her father-in-law and most important she will cook the food to be offered at the time of ancestor worship, that is if her husband is an eldest son, for it is only the eldest son who performs the rituals of ancestor worship (*śrāddha*). Although she remains a 'blood relative' to her parents, she also becomes a 'relative by marriage' and the blood bond is somewhat diluted since she is not polluted by a death or birth in her natal *kuṭumba* any longer. Thus continuity in a clan is continuity in the male line. The wives—who also belong to the clan—come from different lines (*kuḷa*-s) and are incorporated into the husband's line by the marriage ritual, and at the same time are severed from their father's line.

In spite of the mixed category of 'blood relatives by marriage', the determining factor is whether one belongs to the same line or not. Blood relatives are said to be of the same clan (*swagotraya*) and relatives by marriage are said to belong to another clan (*paragotraya*) and that is what determines whether one is polluted by a birth or death among any of these relatives. The sister's son, the married daughter, and the son-in-law are 'of another line' (*paragotraya*) but they have a special relationship.

Among many brahmin temple servants, daughters are still married within a year or so of their puberty. I have met one woman in her thirties who was married pre-pubertally. This, I was told, is done seldom nowadays due to the pressure of public opinion and the government stance on the issue. However, I was told that about a generation ago the norm was to marry daughters pre-pubertally. This custom was explained by Sahasrakhyi as follows: it is believed that the ancestors drink the menstrual blood of an unmarried daughter.[4] Menstrual blood is polluting, and carefully avoided. It is therefore considered very bad to keep a post-pubertal daughter at home. If the daughter is married before puberty she is kept at her parents' home until puberty and joins her husband's home upon attaining maturity. The defloration of pre-pubertal wives is considered to be very bad.[5]

When the daughter becomes a wife she acquires the right.(*adhikāra*) to cook for her husband's household. Up to the arrival of the first daughter-in-law the mother does the cooking, but when the daughter-in-law (*bahu*) arrives she usually takes over much of the cooking, although the mother-in-law (*śāśu*) has control over the supplies and closely supervises the work of her *bahu*. Wives must cook the food for the ancestors at the time of the funeral ceremonies

which the husband will then offer to the manes. On the fourth day of marriage, in the evening, there is a ceremony which takes place in the groom's father's house where the couple will reside from then on. This is an offering to the groom's ancestors. The cooking of the food for the offering must be done by the bride. Usually this takes the form of her just entering the kitchen and touching the cooking pots (*hāṇḍi chuī*) rather than doing the actual cooking which is usually done by the mother of the groom. Then the groom offers the balls of food (*piṇḍa*) with his wife by his side. That same evening the couple will consummate the marriage.

There are three times in the year when funeral offerings are made. On the anniversary of the death of the father, of the mother and during the dark fortnight of the month of *Āświn* (Sept.–Oct.) which is called *pitru pakhya*, the fortnight of the ancestors. Having a wife who will do the cooking is a prerequisite for performing these ceremonies. An unmarried son or a widower cannot perform them. He can do so only at the time of the death of his father or mother and on the first anniversary of the death. During that year the son cannot participate in any auspicious (*mangaḷa*) ceremonies such as marriage, thread ceremony, ear-piercing, or puberty rites. Although the dead person has, after the performance of the first *śrāddha* on the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth day after the death, passed from the world of ghosts (*preta loka*) to the world of ancestors (*pitru loka*), for one year the dead person is said to 'ride on the son' going back and forth between both worlds. During that year the eldest son must not eat outside his house; if unmarried he must not marry. But after this first yearly *śrāddha* that son may not perform the ceremony again until he marries. If there are no other married sons the ceremony can be performed by a son-in-law. I will return to the importance of the role of the wife as the feeder of her husband's household and ancestors, but before I do so let me mention who the ancestors are to whom one offers food.

During the offerings on the anniversary of the death (*bārsika śrāddha*, *bārsika* meaning yearly), *piṇḍa*-s are offered only to the person deceased on that date. During the fortnight of the ancestors, offerings of cooked food are prepared by the wife and offered by her husband to his ancestors, with his wife by his side. These are seven, five or three generations, depending on the families, on his father's side and the same on his mother's father's side. The son must remember and invoke the names of his forefathers and their wives and those of

his mother's forefathers and their wives. The father's line is called *pitrukuḷa* and that of the mother's father *mātuḷa*. On the last day of this fortnight which is the new moon day, a brahmin is called (the family priest, *kuḷa purohita*) to offer the balls of food to all these ancestors plus to the mother's brother (*māmũ*).

The mother's line (*mātuḷa*), it must be emphasized, is not a line of mothers. It is one's mother's father and his wife, his father and his wife and so on up to the seventh, fifth or third generation.[6]

These *śrāddha* ceremonies can be ended once and for all by performing a final funeral ceremony which must also take place during the fortnight of the ancestors. This ceremony can be performed only by a couple; a widowed man or woman cannot perform it. Furthermore it can be done only after a couple's parents—all four of them—are dead. The bones of these ancestors, which have been buried in earthen pots in front of the house, are dug up. The couple takes these bones on a pilgrimage, preferably to Gaya, on the Ganges, in Bihar. Once the pots are unearthed the couple must neither look back nor come back to their house but must proceed to the pilgrimage spot. If a trip to Gaya cannot be afforded, the bones (*asti*) can also be taken to Markandeya tank (one of the tanks in Puri), or to the sea in Puri itself. At the river, tank or sea, on the last day of this fortnight (the new moon day) a brahmin performs the *śrāddha* ceremony and offers *piṇḍas* to the couple's ancestors. Before that offering the couple has taken a purificatory bath. At its conclusion the couple gives a gift (*dāna*)—usually a cow or its monetary equivalent—to the officiating brahmin. After this final funeral the ancestors go to the highest world, the *brahma loka*, and need no longer be fed by their living descendants.[7] The performance of this ceremony is the right of the eldest son, for which he is given an extra share of the inheritance, called *jyeṣṭhānsa* (*jyeṣṭha* means elder and *ansa* means part, share). If the eldest son is widowed or unmarried he will ask either his married son or his married younger brother to perform the ceremony.

Thus to reach the ultimate place of abode, the *brahma loka*, one must be married and one's descendants must be married as well. This is also necessary in order to enter the world of ancestors (*pitru loka*). An unmarried person when he/she dies becomes a demon (*brahma rakhasa*), who will never be satisfied and who will always trouble the living, incapable of being reborn, forever doomed to being a ghost (*preta*).

Being married is not only indispensable for one's welfare in the

afterworld, or the welfare of one's ancestors, but also necessary for the performance of any life-cycle ceremony which must take place under the sponsorship of the married head of a household. Such a man is called a *karttā*; one necessary requisite to being a head of household is to be married and one's wife must be alive. The wife is the *karttrī*. Both their presence is indispensable at all life-cycle ceremonies. The word *karttā* comes from the root *kar*—meaning to do.[8] The wife is the person who enables her husband to become a doer. Without a wife one cannot perform certain enjoined actions which are collectively called 'dharmic works' (dharmic from *dharma*), and therefore one cannot accumulate merit (*puṇya*).[9]

The role of the wife centers around feeding the household and cooking for its ancestors. On her proper behaviour depends the welfare of the group. If she follows her duties as a housewife (*gārhastya dharma*)[10] the living group as well as the ancestors will prosper. If she does not, particularly if she is unchaste, (*biṭapī*, adulteress) calamity will befall the house. These calamities all seem to fall under the category of natural disasters, such as disease, fire, accidents, famine, etc. We will see in later chapters that the deities responsible for these phenomena are always goddesses. Furthermore, the ancestors will not receive the food cooked by an adulteress. In fact it seems that this is the reason for the calamities.

The importance and meaning attached to the wife's cooking is further elucidated in the attitude toward widows. A widow is said to be cursed; she is very inauspicious (*amangaḷa*) and will not be invited to any ceremonies. She will abstain from a wide variety of foods—meat, fish, tomatoes, onion, garlic, oil being the main items. Although the necessities of life may require a widow to cook, she will usually not cook food for any ceremonies. She cannot decorate herself, nor wear the signs of marriage, which are: bangles (*kāca*), red powder dot (*sindura ṭapā*) in the middle of her forehead and in the parting of her hair (*sindur*), coloured clothes—she wears only white garments—oil in her hair, black cosmetic around her eyes (*kajala*) and any ornaments. Such treatment is not meted out to the widower since it is not thought or felt that he holds the life of his wife in his hands. The wife in her capacity as feeder of her husband, holds his life in her hands; she is the life maintainer *par excellence*. If the husband dies, it is felt that she is at fault.

However, the attitude of my friends and acquaintances in Puri towards widows had none of the intensity which Harper ascribes to

the Havik Brahmins of South India. Among this group widows seem to be hated and feared as poisoners (Harper 1969, 82–5). Puri is full of widows. Many widows from the south or from Bengal settle there and devote their time to ritual activity. The fact that widows often become concubines also indicates that they are not feared as they are among the Havik. However, there is a link between the attitude towards widows in Puri and among the Havik Brahmins; in both cases it centers around food. Among the Havik it takes the extreme form of believing that widows poison members of their households. In Puri it takes the mild form that widows are not permitted to cook, especially at the auspicious life-cycle ceremonies. Harper also mentions the inauspiciousness of widows: 'the sight of a widow at the beginning of an auspicious venture, say searching for a groom for one's daughter, is enough to cause the search to be postponed until another day' (ibid., 85). Harper goes on to show how women in general are dangerous, not only widows, and gives as evidence the impurity of menstrual blood and sex. But impurity and inauspiciousness—as will become more and more clear in the rest of this work—do not correspond. Widows, or more precisely, post-menopausal widows, are the only women I have seen in Puri being temple attendants (*pūjāriṇī*) (Pl. 4). Widows are also granted the right to perform certain ritual duties in the temple such as waving the fly-whisk. During the festival of Sandal Paste (*candan jātrā*, see Chapter 3) when the small movable images are taken in procession to one of the tanks in Puri, several widows head the procession waving fly-whisks. Old widows—i.e. after the child bearing age—are pure. They fast all the time; they never eat fish, meat and other 'hot' food, they wear white (colour of purity) garments and in general live an austere life. It is only by dissociating inauspiciousness from impurity that one can understand why it is only old widows who can become temple attendants. I will return later to this point.

However, the fate of the widow is dreaded by women. In the month of Kārtika (Oct.–Nov.) many women, the majority of whom are widows, flock to Puri. During that month they take an early morning purificatory bath daily in the sea or in one of Puri's five tanks and perform a worship for the sake of not becoming a widow in their next life (this worship is called *dāmodara pūjā*). Women hope that they will predecease their husbands. When a woman dies before her husband, women relatives and neighbours come and take from her body her bangles, *sindur* and pieces of her garment in the hope

that they too will die before their husbands. The body of such a woman will be decorated with all the signs of the married woman, clad in a new, preferably red, garment and accompanied to the cremation ground by drummers and fifers. Along the way people will throw *sindur*, coins or cowrie shells (a traditional currency in Puri).

The contrast between the *sadhabā* and the *bidhabā* (widow; *rāṇḍī* is another word for widow) is very marked. The former is associated with life maintenance, well-being, fertility and auspiciousness; the latter is associated with inauspiciousness and death. In the household the widow loses her authority over her daughter-in-law, who has become the *karttrī*. Although a widower is not similarly cursed and inauspicious, he loses his status of *karttā* and must be replaced by a younger brother or a married son, or must remarry.

The wife is the life maintainer not only because she feeds but also because it is through her that her husband's line, his *kuḷa*, will be maintained. At the marriage ceremony which takes place in the bride's father's house, the bride's father at the crucial moment in the ceremony, when he actually gives his daughter to the groom, utters the following words: 'I have done the gift of a maiden for the sake of a son' (*'putrārte mũ kanyā dāna kali'*). The gift of a daughter (*kanyā dāna*), which is always accompanied by other material gifts (called *jāutuka*, dowry), is one of the most meritorious actions that a man may perform. As the phrase uttered would suggest, the merit arises out of the fact that one has done an action that will result in the maintenance of another's line.

The status of the wife as a life—and line—maintainer, in other words as an *ahya* (since brahmin widows cannot remarry, her becoming a widow means that she terminates being both a life and a line maintainer), is constantly underlined. The connection between life maintaining (feeding) and line maintaining (producing a son) is appositely expressed by the following custom: the bride's father will not eat in his daughter's father-in-law's (called his *samudi*) house until she has produced a son, when it is said that 'the gift of a maiden has become fruitful' (*'kanyā dāna phalaprada helā'*).

In all the exchange of gifts between affines, the *ahya* status of the wife is expressed in the nature of the gifts. Such gifts are called *śankulā bhāra*; *śankulā* comes from *śankulibā*, 'to invite', 'to treat a person well', and *bhāra* means basket. These gifts are sent by the parents of the wife when they invite their daughter and son-in-law to

visit them, or conversely, by the wife's parents-in-law when their daughter-in-law is at her parents, in order to invite her back home. The basket must include a sari with a coloured border, preferably red but never black, red powder (*sindur*), eye black, feet dye (*alatā*, red dye for the feet of the woman), bangles, mirror, turmeric (rubbing turmeric paste into the skin is considered both beautifying and health-giving, and is done by women at all auspicious ceremonies),[11] oil for the hair, sweets, fruits such as mangoes, coconuts and jackfruits and a fish. The fish is a symbol of auspiciousness. People also say that the fish means that the woman is not a widow since widows cannot eat fish. When the bride first goes to her husband's house after the marriage, a fish goes ahead of her. At wedding ceremonies, the painters (*citrakāra*) are called to draw auspicious paintings around the entrance door. The most common motifs are young women holding plantain trees, fishes and *purṇa kumbha*, a brass pot full of water covered with mango leaves and topped by a coconut (Pl. 7). The fish is the 'fruit' of the water, and water is associated with women. In common, vulgar speech, female secretion is called 'water' (*pāṇi*). This is why I think the fish is included along with fruits, because they stand for the fertility of the wife. It must also be pointed out that all the other items which are intended to decorate the body of the wife are inseparably linked in people's minds with attractiveness and beauty. This was brought home for me on one occasion when I came to Brundabati's and was asked by her: 'Look at my daughter-in-law, isn't she ugly?' I could not discern any change in the physical beauty of the young woman and was at a loss to understand what she meant. She then pointed to her daugher-in-law's lack of ornaments; these had temporarily been deposited with the pawnbroker to raise money for the purchase of a plot of land. This attitude is also illustrated in some of the stories that the devadasis tell concerning the origin of their present ritual, which I will retell later.

If the families are well off, gold is also included. Such exchanges do not take place within the *kuṭumba*; they are said to 'move around the girl.' They express the active sexuality of the woman as well as her fertility.

A barren woman is also considered very inauspicious. She is never allowed to touch infants for it is believed that if she does so, they will wither and die. In an interview with a farmer from a village just outside Puri, I asked him questions about a festival called Raja Sankranti which celebrates the yearly menses of the goddess earth.

I asked him whether a woman who never menstruates is considered inauspicious. He told me that there was such a woman in his village and that she was an 'inauspicious woman' (*amangaḷa strī*). He also told me that no one will marry her. When I asked whether she wears the signs of marriage (*sindur*, bangles, coloured garment) he answered as follows: 'Even if she does, is she beautiful?' He also told me that when one starts any enterprise such as going to the fields and sees her, it is very bad. One must come back and thus undo the harm. But if one just goes ahead it is inauspicious (*amangaḷa*). Also at the time of a wedding people will force her to stay inside so that the groom's procession may not run into her.

The onset of puberty for a girl used to take place after her marriage and at that time a ceremony was held called 'again marriage' (*punāhah bibāha*) in the husband's house, complete with fire sacrifice. Today the puberty ceremony is celebrated in the girl's house since she is not married and it is called by various names, the most frequently used being 'house sacrifice' (*ghara jagyā*). I will leave the description of this ceremony for the next section since it is celebrated in the same way among the devadasis. It is also classified as an auspicious (*mangaḷa*, *śubha*) ceremony. So in these cases, as in that of the old widows, there is a disjunction between impurity—specifically the impurity of menstrual blood—and auspiciousness.

The difference between the devadasis and the daughters of the brahmin temple servants is that the latter are no longer allowed to go outside after puberty. Up to then girls wear frocks and are allowed to run in the streets. After puberty a girl wears a sari and stays at home. The wives of the priests also stay at home; they do not even go to the temple. They go only on visits to their parents' house at night, in a veiled rickshaw or with the sari drawn over their faces. A woman will go out only after her older children are married.[12]

A brahmin servant can take another wife if his first wife has not produced a son. The need for a son is felt as crucial since it is only through a son that one's line can be continued. A man dying without a son ends his line: (*bangśa śeṣa*). The preservation and continuation of a line rests on the woman. The end of one's line is not only viewed as a great personal tragedy but as a failure to repay one's debt (*ruṇa*) to the ancestors. One has a duty to continue one's line. Even though one's funeral ceremony can be performed by the son-in-law, the line will end with oneself for the son of one's daughter does not belong to the *kula*. The fertility of women in the shape of sons preserves the

kuḷa; women themselves do not, since daughters are given out and lost to the *kuḷa*. Continuity in time is brought about through the male line. The discontinuity of women is expressed in what happens to them at marriage when their bodily substance is changed and they become half of their husband's body (*arddhāngini*).

This asymmetry between the man and the woman can be further elucidated by understanding the role of each in conception. A child is produced by the mixing of the man's seed (*bīrjya*) and the woman's secretion (*raja*). The word *raja* in this context refers to the colourless (*sādhā*) vaginal secretion which is said to be ejaculated by the woman during intercourse, much in the same way as a man's semen is ejaculated. However, the word can also mean menstrual blood, although in everyday speech other words are used (such as *māsikiā*, *chuā*, *māru*); the ceremony on the occasion of a girl's first menstruation is also called *rajabati* and a menstruating woman is called *rajaswala*. Both *bīrjya* or *raja* are extracted from the blood, twenty-one drops of blood making one drop of *bīrjya* or *raja*. If the strength (*śakti*) of the male seed is greater then it will be a boy, and if that of the women's secretion is greater then it will be a girl. When a man has a girl people say to him: 'Oh, you are useless, she is stronger than you!'

The seed is deposited in the woman who is then called *khetra*, meaning womb or field. The mother's blood (*rakta*) feeds the seed so that it grows.[13] Women are said to have more blood than men. The greater abundance of blood in women is evidenced in their menstruating. It was explained to me that menstrual blood is an excess of blood, just like urine and faeces are the excess food, and like them, it is dirty, polluted. Also a woman is purified by getting rid of this excess dirty blood, just as one is purified by getting rid of excrement in one's body.[14]

The continuity of the line therefore is achieved through the seed, (*bīrjya*), and the maintenance of the line depends on the feeding by the women, both in terms of food and in terms of feeding the embryo with the woman's blood. By being barren or becoming a widow, a woman has failed in her essential function and is therefore regarded as very inauspicious. When a man becomes a widower he has not similarly failed because he is not a life-maintainer. The association between women and feeding, life-supporting, and life-preserving is extremely strong. When life fails, such as when the husband weakens or dies, the wife is felt to be responsible. In the local phrase: 'She did not do her dharmic work so her husband died'

(*tāra dharma kharma nathilā, swamitā marigalā*), it being understood that the dharmic work of the wife is to take care of her husband, children and in-laws.

I will return to these issues later and will now only restate the cluster and related categories that surround the wife: women have an abundance of blood; the blood of the wife feeds the embryo; the menstrual blood of the unmarried daughter wrongly feeds the ancestors; the wife feeds her husband and members of his household; she also feeds the ancestors; an unchaste wife cannot successfully feed the ancestors; this results in calamities befalling the family.

Although the menstrual blood of women is impure and menstruating women are considered and treated as untouchable for a period of four days, it is also a source of auspiciousness. We have seen that old widows can offer food in small temples. Young women never do this in temples and usually not in the household either.[15] They will prepare the food that is to be offered to the household deities, as well as make flower garlands, scent by pasting sandalwood, draw designs with rice powder, and clean the shrine. But the offerings are done by the husband. The word for temple service is *sebā*; *sebaka* is the man who performs the service. The women say and are said by the men to do the *sebā* of their husbands. The husband is called *swāmi* or *pati*, meaning Lord, and his wife does his *sebā* as he does the *sebā* of the gods. The brahmin *sebākas* in fact say that when doing the *sebā* of Lord Jagannātha they feel like women, since they do the work of women. For a woman, her duty, her place in life and in the world, in other words her *dharma*, is the *gārhastya dharma*, the *dharma* of the housewife which consists of doing the *sebā* of her husband and her father and mother-in-law. This is expressed by the daughter-in-law who, every morning, is supposed to wash the feet of these three persons and sip the water from this ablution (*pāduka*). This is also done in the worship of deities with the worshippers sipping the *pāduka* of the deity. It is also done to any superior or exalted person such as a guru. In fact, worship of deities and of people consists in the same acts of feeding, dressing, washing, decorating, etc. In other words, in doing all the acts which further the well-being of the person or god worshipped.

I have never seen, in any of the many temples of Puri, a young woman doing the *pūjā*. As I mentioned above, the only women I have seen were two old widows attending two small roadside shrines. They told me that as long as their husbands were alive they could not

perform *pūjā*.[16] The same statement was repeated to me by temple servants and their wives. This prohibition can possibly be related to the one against going outside. Whether one goes outside to do the *sebā* of a deity or for any other reason the crucial thing is that one goes outside. Going outside endangers the chastity of a wife. Old widows and older women are considered past the age of sexual attraction. The young women who do go outside, such as lower caste women, are often considered to be sexually available. It is a fact that several temple servants of my acquaintance had secret affairs with women from various service castes. The devadasi is not chaste and her frequent public exposures, which are inseparable from her role, are perceived to be incompatible with chastity.[17]

Two factors combine to make it of extreme importance that the wife be segregated from public life during most of her child-bearing years. First, the consequences of a wife's lack of chastity are grave: the ancestors will not receive their food offerings which will cause calamities to befall the household. Secondly, women are believed to have four times the sexual power of men (*kāma cāturguṇa*). They are thus four times more likely than men to be unable to resist a sexual urge. Chastity in men is also a virtue but the merit or demerit accruing to a man as a result of his sexual behaviour affects only himself and not his household or his ancestors.

This differential endowment in sexual powers is also invoked to explain the difference in age between a man and a woman at marriage. The appearance of menses in a girl is the sign that she is strong enough to bear a child. She is full of *raja* which is, as we have seen, the equivalent in women of semen. A man, on the other hand, is not considered to be physically fully mature until the age of twenty-four when his bones and muscles reach their full growth. Furthermore, women lose very little, if any, of their *raja*, while men are prone to 'spill their seed' and thus waste their strength. *Raja*, like semen, is a source of strength when stored and women produce any appreciable quantity of it only as a result of the friction during intercourse, while men can produce and lose their seed under various circumstances. A man, by the age of twenty-four, has most likely lost a portion of his semen, whereas a post-pubertal girl around thirteen, fourteen, fifteen has not lost any. Such a girl 'full of *raja*' would therefore not be a match to a man her own age who would not have the sexual strength to match hers. Men marry between the ages of twenty-five and thirty-five whereas women are often married within a year of their

attaining menarche. A difference of age of fifteen years between husband and wife is quite usual. This age difference was said to be necessary to offset the unequal endowment of sexual powers between the sexes, not in the name of some abstract principle of equality but for the sake of a fruitful match, a younger man not being considered capable of successfully mating with a woman his own age.[18]

The goddess Subhadrā, the sister of Jagannātha and Baḷabhadra, an unmarried goddess, is given the epithet of *tapta kāncana gaurāngī*, literally 'heated gold white body,' that is she has a body which is like gold heated to the point of becoming white, very beautiful to look at but very dangerous to touch. The three siblings are likened to a match: Jagannātha is the black dot at the top of the match (Jagannātha's colour is black), Baḷabhadra is the white wood stick (his colour is white) and Subhadrā is the flame (her colour is yellow). Lord Krishna's favourite *gopi*, Rādhā, is also given this epithet. It must be kept in mind that Rādhā's husband, Candrasena, was impotent.[19]

Virginity is associated with heat and danger deriving from that force or power residing in the accumulated *raja* of the virgin. The goddess Durgā is also called the virgin (*kumāri* or *kanyā*) goddess in the *Mahābhārata*,[20] and in the *Skanda Purāṇa*.[21] Durgā in the myth of her origin (told to me by a brahmin) is said to appear in a mountain of fire which was produced by the anger of all the gods.[22] Subhadrā is considered by a number of people to be Durgā and such a view is supported by the fact that her chariot is decorated with nine representations of goddesses who are either aspects of Durgā or incarnations of Durgā (see Chapter 9 for details).

Thus, to summarize, on women depend men's well-being, the maintenance of a man's line, and the well-being of the ancestors. These last two items also depend on the chastity of the woman and this was seen to be one of the reasons—along with the greater sexual power of women—for the segregation of women from the public realm.

There is one more important aspect concerning women which I want to touch upon, and that has to do with their social status as compared to that of the men. The major difference is that women have only one major life cycle ceremony (*samskāra*), that of marriage, whereas men have at least two important ones before that of marriage, namely the ear-piercing ceremony (*karṇa bedha*) and the thread ceremony (*brata* or *upanayana*). Ear-piercing is supposed to be done when a boy is four years, four months and four days old. The thread

ceremony usually takes place between eight and fourteen years of age. Without this ceremony a boy cannot perform the rituals in the temple and that is because he is not yet a brahmin, a twice-born (*duijā*). The transformation that takes place in the boy at the time of *upanayana* alters his condition significantly. Before it he is only a *śūdra*, not a brahmin. Although a woman—as we have seen—is also transformed by marriage, she never becomes twice-born. Before his initiation a boy will eat with the women and only after it can he eat in the presence of his father. Women always eat after the men.

The difference between brahmin men and women expresses itself in their different response to certain types of pollution. The men, if they have been defiled by a dog, the touch of a menstruous woman, or that of an untouchable, in other words by any 'touch pollution,' will observe more extensive purifying rituals than the women under similar circumstances. A man in such cases will change his clothes; take a bath reciting *mantras*, in particular the *gayatri mantra* which only twice-born men can recite; change his sacred thread; eat a *tulāsi* leaf (sacred to Viṣṇu) and if there is any *mahāpraśād* (food offered in the temple) or dried *mahāpraśād* (called *nirmālya*) in the house he will eat some of it. A short version of all this is just to change the thread and recite *mantras*. Women, who do not have the sacred thread and who are not to know the *gayatri mantra*, only change their clothes and sprinkle water on their head. Brahmin widows, however, will do more extensive purification, such as eating *tulāsi* or *mahāpraśād* and taking a bath. I was told that the men have to be particularly careful about preserving their purity because they have to go into the temple to perform rituals, whereas the women stay at home. This asymmetry in the response of men and women to pollution does not exist in the case of death pollution (*murtikā*) or birth pollution (*chuttikā*).

Marriage, it would seem, is not the equivalent for women of the sacred thread ceremony for men. It changes the way they are related to their natal *kuṭumba* and relates them in a new way to their husbands' groups, but it does not alter their status as *śūdṛa*-s. In an analysis of rules of purity and impurity in the *dharmaśāstra* literature, Orenstein (1967:123, n. 12) has pointed out the asymmetry between men and women in the observance of the rules of relational pollution (incurred when someone in one's kin group dies or is born) and the rules of act pollution (when one contacts a polluting object or being). In the observation of the latter set of rules all women, regardless of

their caste, followed the *śūdra* pattern. This non-twice-born status of women is evident throughout the *dharmaśāstra* literature, as Romila Thapar has pointed out:

> In the legal texts, however, in the *dharma-śāstra* and similar literature, the blanket term woman is used irrespective of the social origins or status of any woman. It is interesting that whereas these texts take great care to classify men with a minutiae of distinctions, women are generally treated as a uniform category. Furthermore the status of women as a whole is clearly defined, for they are unambiguously equated with the *śūdras* (1975:9).

A possible explanation for this *śūdra* status of women may be found in the reason I was given of why women do not perform *pūjā*. They do not do so because they are *mārā* or *chuā*. Both these words mean polluted and both these words become words for menstrual blood (*māru* and *chuā*; the other word *māsikiā* comes from the root *māsa* meaning month). Women are *mārā* because they menstruate and are untouchable during four days every month, at which time they eat separately, remain in a corner of the house, do not cook or bathe, and do not decorate their bodies. Also, they do not use *sindur* on their forehead but put a black dot instead. They do not comb their hair or put oil in it, or change their clothes. They do not allow their children to touch them except for naked, small, unweaned children.

These common observances of women, regardless of their caste, seem to be what men have in mind when they say that women are *mārā*. Women, of course, are not always *mārā*, only during four days in the month, but all women are *mārā* for four days in the month. Another important aspect of menstruation is that, unlike other bodily functions, it cannot be controlled or refined. The word *samskāra* means, among other things, 'refining', 'perfecting'. In the daily routine of brahmins the bodily functions are well regulated and controlled and these can be further controlled through diet and fasting. But menstrual blood flows spontaneously and cannot be regulated as to time or quantity.

I would now like to examine some of the implications that this information has for various issues in the literature on the subject. This information throws light on the question of descent and marriage. It seems to be clear that the concept of bilateral descent must be re-examined. Endogamy would seem to necessarily entail bilaterality as Yalman, among others, states:

In this sense caste is always bilateral. This ritual quality [caste blood] is always received from both parents in all the communities we have mentioned. In the same way caste affiliation is also bilateral. A single parent can never 'place' (or 'fix') the position of a child in the caste hierarchy independently: the child's position is always critically dependent upon the status of the other parent (1963:40).

What we have in the case of the Puri brahmin temple servants is an asymmetry between the man and the woman both in terms of status and in terms of their role in conception and birth. However the asymmetry is the reverse of that found by Yalman in the case of the Nayars' tali tying rites where one 'acquires membership in a caste . . . normally through the mother' (Yalman 1963:41). In the case of the Puri temple brahmins the man's and the woman's role in conception is not the same. What is inherited and passed on to future generations comes from the seed and not from the women's secretion which produces a girl, whereas the male seed produces a boy, and it is the latter who continues the ancestral line. The girl will, upon marriage, be lost to that line. The mother is the field which nourishes the child. This state of affairs corresponds to what Inden has found in his historical study of Bengali marriage: 'It was thought that the coded substance [*dharma* plus body] which defined a caste or clan should properly be transmitted from one generation to the next through the semen of men and not the uterine blood of women' (Inden 1976:95).

The question remains, why then are marriages contracted with women of the same caste? Inden offers only the general statement that 'a woman of one *varṇa* could not be transformed into the proper wife of a man of another. After all, the field had to be suitable for the seed which was to be planted in it' (Inden 1976:98). But what exactly accounts for the suitability of a field? When I asked why wives have to have the same caste as their husbands, I was told that it is because they have to cook the food at *śrāddha* ceremonies. This suitability seems to center around feeding the *kuḷa*. This cooked food is of the ordinary type: rice boiled in water being the central ingredient (*bhātta* which also means simply 'meal'). This type of food is only accepted from equals since it is extremely vulnerable to pollution, having been handled and made porous through boiling, thus making it even more receptive to outside touch; and besides, it is not protected by the purifying agent of clarified butter (*ghī*) or by a skin which enables the food to be washed.[23] In the temple kitchen the cooks wear mouth and hair cloth coverings to protect the food from possible pollution by

saliva or sweat. What Marriott and Inden have called coded substance, that is both a physical body and a set of rules of behaviour (1974), is inherited in the male line but maintained and sustained by women.[24] Such maintenance is achieved through worship.

Although one can in some sense speak of bilaterality in the Indian case, it is certainly not the kind of bilaterality found in western societies where one inherits equally characteristics from the mother and the father. Position in caste and clan are inherited through the father; the rank of the mother is crucial not because of what she passes on to her progeny, but because of the nature of her contribution as a feeder, a maintainer of life, and the cultural meanings surrounding food in caste society.

This point can be illustrated by what happened to my collaborator, a Puri brahmin (not of the temple servants class). His marriage was a 'love' marriage, that is it was not arranged by his parents, and he chose his own bride. She was not a brahmin but a khsatriya belonging to a royal family from a small state in the south of Orissa. When my collaborator's father was told by his son of his plans and realized he could do nothing about it, he went to the assembly of learned brahmins, the *mukti maṇḍapa*, for advice. He was told by the learned brahmins that by marrying a brahmin, his daughter-in-law had become a brahmin, but after the marriage she should not go to her parents' house, and should not eat there 'because she has to give *śrāddha*' to his son's ancestors. But she did go to her parents' house and, as it turned out, that was in large measure the cause for the strained relationship that later developed between the son and his parents. In the learned brahmins' mind, it was eating and cooking for the ancestors that was related. By eating the brahmin food, this woman could cook the proper food for the ancestors.

The concept of blood is quite similar to that of the Bengalis discussed by Fruzzetti and Östör. The inheritable substance is blood, a coded substance inclusive of rank, as well as norms and actions appropriate to that rank, which is passed on by the man. This is so because 'in marriage the sister becomes the means, vehicle and the receptacle through which her *poti* (husband) maintains his line' (Fruzzetti and Östör 1976:118).

In the Nayar as well as in the Basavi case (the latter is mentioned by Dumont 1970c:118–19), what corresponds to the category 'blood' is inherited through the women. Marriage among these groups has a different meaning. It is revealing to contrast these cases to that of the

devadasis, who do not have anything resembling the Nayar *tāli* tying rites. I will, in the next section, describe the ritual which constitutes a marriage to the deity among them. But before doing so, some remarks about Yalman's explanation in terms of the concern with women's purity are in order. For him the *tāli* tying rites among the Nayars, as well as pre-pubertal marriages among brahmins everywhere, must be explained by a concern with women's purity—i.e. their chastity—which in turn is crucial since, according to him, it is on the woman that one's caste membership ultimately rests (Yalman 1963:41). In Puri the purity—i.e. chastity—of women is also of great concern, as we have seen, and people go to great lengths to prevent any possible encounter with any men outside of the woman's house. The reasons for this concern seem to be different from the one given by Yalman. The ancestors will not eat the food cooked by an adulteress. The maintenance of the *kuḷa* is endangered by the unchastity of the woman. This I think can reasonably be inferred to derive from the fact that such a woman may be bearing a seed which does not come from the ancestors (via her husband), and therefore she constitutes a threat to the continuity of the line. This reasoning is reinforced when one realizes that the cases in which women's chastity is not important are those in which the continuity of the *kuḷa* is assured by the women themselves, as in the case of the Nayar women and the Basavi. Nayar and Basavi women can sleep with several men and are not enjoined to be strictly faithful to one man. The Basavi woman transmits to her offspring her father's *kuḷa*—playing the role of a son. The Nayars are matrilineal. It is true that their sexuality is not totally unrestricted, since they cannot have sexual relations with men inferior in status to their own. But this is paralleled in the case of man; men should not have sexual relations with woman of a rank superior to their own, nor with untouchable women. So in terms of sexual behaviour, things are reversed for men and women, but one cannot be said to be more restricted than the other. With unions between different *varṇa*-s, what we have is the following: men can have sexual relations with women of lower rank but cannot be fed by them, while women can feed men of lower *varṇas* but cannot have sexual relations with them.

The chastity of the wives of the temple brahmins is crucial not because it is they who transmit the characteristics of the caste and the *kuḷa* to their children, but to ensure that only the produce of that species of seed that has been sown in it is the one that will be reaped and not the produce of some other species of seed. A woman, like a

field, must be well guarded, for one wants to reap what one has sown and not what another has sown, since the produce of a field belongs to its owner. Such an idea was expressed long ago by Manu:

> 35. . . . . for the offspring of all created beings is marked by the characteristics of the seed.
> 36. Whatever (kind of) seed is sown in a field, prepared in due season, (a plant) of that same kind, marked with the peculiar qualities of the seed, springs up in it.
> 37. This earth, indeed, is called the primeval womb of created beings; but the seed develops not in its development any properties of the womb (Manu IX 35–7 in Bühler 1969:333, 334).

This theory by the ancient law-giver certainly corresponds well to what is the case today in Puri. These words also give us a clue perhaps to understanding why all women are classified as *śūdra*-s. Women are like the earth, and the earth is one, although it is owned by many different types of men.

Devadasis

The devadasis do not marry.[25] They consider themselves to be married to Jagannātha. Two ceremonies represent this marriage. First the devadasis are dedicated to temple service pre-pubertally, and this constitutes a marriage to the deity. Then at the time of menarche, another ceremony is held which is for them like a wedding and corresponds to the ceremony of '*punaha bibāhà*' mentioned in the previous section, which used to be performed in the groom's house when the wife who had been married pre-pubertally attains puberty. It is at the puberty ceremony that the devadasis consummate their marriage to the deity with either the king or a brahmin temple servant.

The ceremony of dedication to temple service is called *sāḍhi bandhana*. The *sāḍhi* (which I will render in its English version from now on: sari) is a cloth which, in this case, comes from the image of Jagannātha. *Bandhana* means 'tying'. The name for this ceremony and the ceremony itself is the same for all temple servants.[26] It is a prerequisite for becoming a temple servant (*sebāka*). One must petition the king for the performance of this ceremony, and his consent is required.[27] The king also grants the privilege of having the sari tied to some non-temple servants, such as heads of monasteries (*mahanta*) and other important personages who can then perform certain ritual duties in the temple, mostly waving the fly-whisk or fanning.

The prerequisites for a girl to be dedicated are several. She has to be whole of body, not be lame, deaf, or blind, or have any bleeding or suppurating wounds.[28] It must be a devadasi who petitions the king even though the girl's natural mother may be a non-devadasi. Also widows cannot petition the king, as the case of Brundabati illustrates.

The devadasi mother of the girl first has to send a written petition to the court, stating her desire to have the ceremony of tying the sari performed for her daughter. She must at that time send a fee of fifteen rupees. The king's officers then send a notice to different persons of good reputation asking them to vouch for the girl's knowledge of singing and dancing and for her caste. If the girl is not the natural child of the devadasi mother, or of a devadasi's brother, that is, if she has been adopted, the caste of her natural parents must be of the *pāṇi-sprusya* (or *pāṇichuā*) category. *Pāṇiśprusya*—literally meaning water touching—refers to all the castes who can give water to brahmins.[29] She cannot come from castes which are forbidden to give water to brahmins (*pāṇiaśprusya*) and even less so from untouchable castes. Once her eligibility is ascertained by these persons, they send back to the palace their signature approving of the girl's dedication. These persons are usually chosen from among the *pūjā paṇḍā*-s, the *deuḷa karaṇa* (temple record keeper) and from among officers of the king.

An auspicious day is then chosen for the performance of the ceremony. That day the girl takes a bath early in the morning, rubs her body with turmeric, and fasts. She wears new bangles, a new sari, new ornaments, and a new blouse. She must then receive the initiatory mantra from the devadasis' guru. This is called *guru dikhya*. The guru of the devadasis is a different person from that of the male temple servants. Theirs is also the guru of the king and queen. The girl and the guru sit close together and are covered by a single new cloth. Thus hidden, the guru whispers a *mantra* in her ear (*karṇa mantra*). Her body is purified by this initiation. Without the *guru dikhya*, the sandal paste mark on the nose (*chittā*) which has to be worn during the ritual cannot be given.

She is then taken to the temple by other devadasis, these being her mother, mother's sisters, grandmother and the latter's sisters. They enter the temple through the main eastern gate and go directly to the main temple. There they stand at the gate from the dance hall (*nāṭa maṇḍapa*) to the antechamber of the inner sanctum (*bāhāra pokhāriā*), which is called *jaya vijaya duāra* (see diagram of the temple, Chapter 6). It is at this spot that the sari is tied. The man who actually ties the

cloth is a servant, called *carceita*,[30] a *karaṇa* by caste. He does it in the presence of Pāta Jośi Mahāpātra, a brahmin who is the head of the thirty-six *nijoga*-s and who has delegated this man to tie the sari in his name. Pāta Jośi Mahāpātra ties the sari of the brahmin servants. In the case of the female servants (*sebikā*) and non-brahmin servants, he delegates someone else to do it.

The cloth is tied around the head of the girl. The cloth is a piece of the sari that is worn by the image of Jagannātha. The *carceita* gives the girl a garland, also taken from the image of Jagannātha. He then draws on her nose the sandal paste mark referred to above. The girl is then given in her folded palms white raw rice (*ārua cāuḷa*) which is topped by a betel nut. She then proceeds to circumambulate once, the main temple. She returns to her house, leaving by the nearest gate, accompanied by the other devadasis, a group of brahmin servants, the *mardaḷi* (drummer, brother of a devadasi) and the musicians (*bajantāri*-s). The men make music and the women do *hulā-huli*. This is a sound produced by women which is high pitched and modulated by the tongue moving rapidly from one side of the mouth to the other. It is a sound that accompanies all auspicious ceremonies and is only produced by women.

When she arrives at her house she stops by the *tulāsi* plant which is usually potted outside the front entrance—sometimes also in the inner courtyard. All Puri houses have such a plant; the pot and the platform on which it rests form a small shrine. Sometimes the plant is potted on the head of a seated goddess whose name is Tulāsi (or Bruṇḍābati). This plant is associated with Viṣṇu and is daily offered to him. The plant belongs to the basil species. In front of the plant auspicious designs drawn with rice powder have previously been made. There is also a 'full pot'. The house priest does a *pūjā* called *mangaḷa āḷapana* there. Such a *pūjā* is done also at all the auspicious ceremonies (ear-piercing, thread ceremony, wedding, puberty). The *purohita* (brahmin vedic priest, not a temple servant) calls on all the gods and goddesses to come and bless (*āśīrbāda*) the girl and protect her in her new role. At the conclusion of this *pūjā* all the devadasis there do what is called *bandāpanā* to the girl. This consists of waving a tray with lighted lamps on it along with white rice, coins and some other things, in front of the girl. The term comes from *bandana*, which means 'to welcome', 'praise', 'salute', or 'worship'. It is done to welcome a new bride, or a groom, or any exalted person who visits one's house. The girl then places the handful of rice which she has

brought from the temple in the front end of her mother's sari which hangs at the hip (*aṇṭi*). Amrapalli gave me a variant description of this part of the ceremony. According to her, the white rice is not given into the garment of the girl's mother but is deposited in front of the Tulāsi plant.

The sari at the head is then untied and along with the garland it is kept in the worship alcove of the house. The rice given by the girl is later cooked with milk and sugar and eaten by all the relatives. The girl's family then gives a feast to the brahmin servants who came home with the girl, as well as any other servants known well to the family. The brahmins are fed *mahāpraśād*, which can be shared by anyone regardless of caste differences. For serving water, however, the services of the barber (*bārika*), are required because brahmin temple servants will not accept water from a devadasi. The musicians are given a token gift in cash after which they leave.

The girl receives a silk (*pāta*) sari from the temple which she will use when performing her rituals. From her relatives she receives gifts of money, clothes, and jewelry.

In the evening, the girl, accompanied by her mother and mother's sister (*mā* and *māusi*) goes to the palace to visit the king. The girl sits near him. At some point she is taken to the king's bedchamber and made to touch the king's bed (*seja morāibā*). Before she leaves, she looks into the king's eyes and he into hers; this is called *miḷana*, meaning to mix or join two things; it can also mean to be united, or it can mean a tryst.

From that day on the devadasi considers herself married to Jagannātha; the following phrase was told to me about this ceremony: 'we have done our marriage with Jagannātha' ('*āme bibāha Jagannāthanka sahita*') and think of their relationship with him as 'the union of husband and wife' ('*swāmi strī sambandha*'). (*Sambandha* is made of two parts: *sam* meaning 'identical' 'same' and *bandha* meaning 'bond', 'tie', and also body; it is also used sometimes to refer to sexual union.) The devadasi will remain unwidowed (*ahya* or *sadhabā*) all her life.

The male servants have exactly the same ceremony of dedication, bearing the same name. The devadasis come to the brahmin servants' dedication ceremony; they accompany them from the temple to their houses doing *hulā-huli*; in their houses the women temple servants will sing auspicious songs (*mangaḷa gīta*) (see Chapter 3 for more details). The devadasis will not eat in the servants' house but will take

the food to be eaten in their own houses. The male servants do not give the handful of rice (*cāula anjuli*) to their mother but deposit it in front of the Tulāsi plant or in front of their household deities. The male temple servants do not go to visit the king on the evening of their dedication ceremony. The age at which men have this ceremony performed is usually later than the women, for in the case of brahmin servants it must take place after the thread ceremony. In their case also it is at the time of the thread ceremony that they receive the initiation from their guru. In the case of non-brahmin servants, the initiation from the guru is received at the time of the dedication ceremony.

The practice of bringing a handful of white rice topped by a betel nut is also observed by brides when they leave their natal homes and go with their husbands to their in-laws' house for the first time. This is done only by the bride, not the groom. The fact that male temple servants also do this at their dedication ceremony could suggest that even for males the ceremony has overtones of a marriage. Male temple servants have their dedication ceremonies before marriage, except for the *pūjā paṇḍā*-s.

At the wedding ceremony the theme of tying is central. The crucial act of the wedding is the tying of the hands of the bride and groom with blades of grass and flower garlands; this is called *hasta gaṇṭhi*: 'hand knot'. At the same time knots are tied either between the shawl of the bride and that of the groom, or seven knots are tied in one cloth spread over the heads of the bride and the groom.[31] Since the word for tying (*bandha*), which is also used to refer to the dedication ceremony, is a part of the word *sambandha*, meaning conjugal or sexual union, and was used by the *pūjāri* of the Krishna temple at one of the tanks in Puri (Indradymna tank, to be precise) to refer to sculptures on that temple representing couples in sexual union, the reference of the dedication ceremony to a marriage ceremony cannot be overlooked. The fact that the ceremony is essentially the same for men and women and that the latter explicitly consider it to be a wedding ritual, indicates that temple dedication for men is analogous to a wedding.

As I mentioned in the previous section, the male temple servants say that they feel like women because they do the work of women for the deity. Sahasrakhyi told me, pointing to his head with the front half portion of the hair shaved, to his lips reddened by chewing betel, to his eyes lined with eye-black, that all these signs made him and the

other brahmin servants look like women; 'We feel like women because like women we do the *sebā* of the Lord.' One of my *daitā* informants told me the following: 'Jagannātha is the only man and everyone else is a woman. At the time of our work we *daitās* are *priyā* (feminine for 'dear', 'beloved'), not *priya* (masculine form).'

The devadasis consider that henceforth they are married to Jagannātha. From that day on they wear all the signs of the married woman. Also, and very importantly, the *gotra* (name of the clan) of the devadasis is the same as that of Jagannātha. The devadasis say that since they are the *ghara loka*—the house people—they have the same *gotra* (the name of the *gotra* is Nāgeśa) as the Lord of the house, Jagannātha. The *daitā*-s also belong to the same clan as Jagannātha.

The visit to the king in the evening and the meeting of the eyes anticipates what is to come later. The ceremony in the temple is not done in front of the image of the god; it takes place quite a distance away from the inner sanctum (*garbha gruha*) into which the devadasis in any case are not allowed to go at any time. There is no object such as a sword, a tree, or any such thing representing the god at the time of the ceremony.[32]

After the temple dedication ceremony the devadasis can perform the morning dance ritual but not the evening singing ritual. The latter they will be able to perform only after puberty.

Puberty is celebrated, according to my informants—both brahmins and non-brahmins—by all castes. It is an auspicious (*mangaḷa*, *śubha*) ceremony. In the case of the devadasis it is a much bigger celebration than the temple dedication one. In the words of one devadasi: 'The puberty ceremony is a very big feast, just like a wedding is for others, so this is like that for us. At my puberty ceremony about two hundred and fifty people came and were fed.'

The ceremony is said to be celebrated in the same general manner by everyone, although the feast on the seventh day varies according to the wealth of the people. There are some traits specific to the devadasis, and I will point out the differences. The first major difference is that the expense for such a large feast in their case is not borne by the family of the devadasi but by a brahmin temple servant.[33] But this is done 'secretly.' I put the words in inverted commas because the meaning of 'secret,' to which I will return, is not exactly the same in Oriya and in English (Oriya words which I translate as 'secret' are: *pracchanna*, *gupta*).

The name given to this ceremony by one of the *rājaguru* is a

sanskritized name meaning 'seeing the first menstrual blood' (or 'seeing menstrual blood for the first time'; *pratama raja darśana*). Other names for this ceremony are 'becoming grown' (*baḍa hebā*); 'holding the house' (*ghara dharibā*); 'staying in the house' (*ghare rahibā*). The last two appellations refer to the fact that this ceremony used to correspond with the arrival of the wife to the husband's house and the beginning of her role as a housewife, when marriages were done pre-pubertally.

When the girl first sees her menstrual blood she is put in a room. There she stays for six days. She is on a restricted diet and is considered to be untouchable for that period of time. She does not comb or oil her hair or wear any of the signs of marriage. Particularly she must not see the face of a man. Only the old women of the house will come and bring her food and, after the fourth day, bathe her every day. This bathing is not the ritual bath which terminates her impure condition. That happens on the morning of the seventh day. The woman palace servant (*dei*) told me that her mother answered her query as to why all this was taking place in the following way: 'Don't you know? God has taken shelter' (in you). (Or 'you will give shelter, refuge, to God: *nā, debatā āśraya nelā*.) You have married and you'll do the work of the god (*bibāha helā debatā kāma karibu*).' The *dei*-s have a wedding ceremony at the time of their puberty (see next chapter for details). The 'work of god' and 'the shelter of the god' she said referred to the fact that from that time on she would start her rituals in the palace and would become the concubine of the king.

The diet of the girl during the six days of seclusion consists of fruit, milk, flattened (uncooked) rice and molasses and no salt. She does not eat curries, fish, meat, and cooked rice. The absence of salt is interesting. In the wedding ceremony, the bride is made to sit on salt and mustard seeds, and during the ritual itself on the wedding platform, at one point the bride throws salt and mustard seeds on the groom. Thus the presence of salt is associated with weddings. It is also associated with kingship. Gonda mentions that during the coronation ceremonies, '. . . vaiśyas (i.e. mainly agriculturists) . . . throw upon him [the king] seventeen bags of saltish earth.' (He gives the following textual references: Āpastamba śrāuta sūtra 18, 6, 4. Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 5, 2, 1, 25 and 5, 1, 5, 1. Gonda 1957:38, n. 546).

From ancient times salt was a monopoly of the king, who was responsible for its manufacture and collected salt as a tax (B. S. Das

1978:258–9).[34] One of the words for the royal tax (*śulka*) also denotes the marriage gift (Gonda 1956:46).[35] The parallels between the king's coronation and the wedding ceremony will be explored in Part II. Salt is associated with weddings and therefore the absence of salt must be taken as an expression of the unfitness of the girl for sexual union.

On the morning of the seventh day, before sunrise, the girl goes along with the other devadasis (in the case of non-devadasis the girl is accompanied by married women) to a tank in the city (or a river). The other devadasis carry with them *mahāpraśād*, bananas and coconuts cut in small pieces, and they also carry turmeric and oil in a pot . At the tank the girl is bathed and her body is rubbed with the oil and the turmeric. She wears a new sari and all the signs of marriage, and her old garment is given to the wife of the washerman (*dhobāṇi*). The other women distribute the food they have brought to children. This bath is called the 'invitation bath' (*nimantrana gāduā*) since the other devadasis are invited to accompany the girl.

Everyone then returns to the house of the girl, accompanied by the drumming and the fifing of the sweepers (*hāḍi*) and the *hulā-huli* of the women. At the house the women do a welcoming ritual to the girl (*bandāpanā*) by waving lights at her and throwing rice and a kind of grass. The family priest then performs the same auspicious-giving ceremony (*mangaḷa-āropanā*) which was performed at the temple dedication ceremony. Then there is the feast to which all the persons in the devadasi group are invited, men and women. Other temple servants are not invited to this feast, which is only for the devadasis and their relatives, as well as neighbours and friends. After everyone has been fed, each guest is given an individual small wicker basket with his or her name written on it, containing a coconut, four betels, a banana, and some leaf cigarettes. To the girls who have not had their dedication ceremony, only half that amount is given. The guests have brought gifts of clothes for the girl.

There is a part of this ritual which I have not included in the above description because it was not confirmed by any of the devadasis. I will, however, mention it and give the reasons why I think none of the devadasis spoke of it. According to one of the *rājaguru*, after the purificatory bath on the seventh morning, the girl picks up in her folded hands a fistful of sand and recites the following words: 'May I have as many husbands as there are grains of sand in my hand.' (*Jetiki bāli konā mora setiki swāmi heu*.) According to the *dei*, the devadasis

at the time hold in their folded hands mustard seeds and recite the following words: 'Let me have as many husbands as there are mustard seeds in my hands' (*Sarisa ānjuli jetiki mora ghaitā setiki*). When I questioned Radha about this custom, she said to me that they do not hold either sand or mustard seeds in their hands but hold up a pot filled with betel nuts. But when I asked her, 'What do you recite at that moment?' She answered, 'I don't remember.' This I interpret as indicating that there was some such custom, and that most likely something to the effect of having many husbands was recited.

What happens after this ceremony I have not been able to establish exactly, because I was given contradictory information. I will report what I was told and then try to hypothesize as to what possibly might have happened.

Radha, who is the only one who never hesitated to talk plainly about her own—as well as the others'—sexual relationships, told me what happened to her after puberty. According to her, it is a rule (*niyam*) that the king should be the first to have sexual intercourse with the devadasi. And to illustrate this she told her own story. The king sent a message that she should come to the palace shortly after her puberty. Radha's mother had died; she had been one of the king's favourites. Because of this, the king looked upon her daughter as his own daughter and would not consummate the marriage with her. He had requested the *rājā* of Talcher to take his place. When the girl, who was only eleven years old, entered the room where the king was she saw the Talcher king, who was an old man in his seventies. When this man saw the young child he exclaimed, 'But she is only a child!' The two kings then spoke to each other in English. They requested her to sing some songs, which she did. After this the other women—palace servants—who were there left. The Puri king—who was Ramacandra Dev, the grandfather of the present king—reassured the girl and having explained to the Talcher king (who was his uncle) that the girl was an orphan and that she was poor, requested him to give generously to her. The old king and the girl were then left alone. After the consummation—which the devadasi called by various terms: *anga lāgi* (giving the body); *anga sparśa* (touching the body) and *anga dubāibā* (body dip)—the Talcher king gave her gold ornaments and so did the Puri king.

However, neither Trinayana nor the other devadasis said that it was a rule for the king to be the first to enjoy the devadasi. However, what they did say is that if the king takes a fancy to one of the young

devadasis, he can have her and that furthermore, he has priority. According to Trinayana—who stands with a golden cane by the devadasi at the time of the morning ritual—one of the brahmin temple servants should be first, but if the king wants her he can have her. However, there is no guarantee that he will since, apart from the queen, many women were kept for the king. In any case, according to him, the meeting between the young pre-pubertal devadasi and the king at the time of the former's temple dedication can be taken as a form of symbolic sexual enjoyment (*upabhoga*).

According to the *dei*, the first 'husband' of the devadasi is that temple servant who has borne the expense of the puberty feast. When I confronted Radha with this information, she made the following rather contradictory statement: 'The devadasi out of fear did not have relations with anyone unless the king called her. We went with the drummer (*mardeli*, a brother of a devadasi), our mother and other old women. We went not earlier than the fourth day after the puberty feast. The mother sent the news to the palace.' Then later in the same conversation she said, 'If the expenditure of the puberty feast is borne by a *paṇḍā*, he will be the first husband. There is no harm if she sleeps with this man before going to the king.'

I think that all this amounts to the following. The king can exercize the right of having a devadasi first if he so desires. This priority of the king is expressed at the time of the devadasi's temple dedication when she goes into the king's chamber and touches his bed and then sits with him and their eyes meet. What possibly could have happened in the case of Radha's experience with the Talcher king is that the king exercized his right not because he desired the girl, but possibly because he knew that she was poor and had no mother and that perhaps no one offered to pay the expenses for her puberty feast.

Clearly, before the kings resided permanently in Puri (see Chapter 4 for history of Oriya kingship), it must have been impossible for the kings to be the first 'husband' of the devadasis. This fact, however, cannot be taken to mean that the relationship between the devadasis and the king represents a latter day degeneration. The king as the living incarnation of Jagannātha and as his 'first servant' (*ādya sebāka*; see Part II) is clearly the logical person to be the devadasis' first 'husband' since they are married to Jagannātha. The priority of the king, though, must have expressed itself, more often than not, only in the symbolic union at the time of temple dedication and in general practice, the actual first 'husband' of a devadasi must have been the

brahmin temple servant who 'secretly' bore the expense of her puberty feast.

The devadasi will not observe death pollution for the king. When the king dies, his eldest son does not perform the funeral ceremonies for him, as is the norm for everyone else. A brahmin is appointed who will substitute for the eldest son and will perform the death ceremonies as well as observe death pollution. The eldest son, who is the heir, does not observe death pollution. In fact, the king is not affected by relational pollution at all. As soon as possible after the death of the old king, the heir is consecrated in a ceremony called *abhiṣekha* (which literally means sprinkling). At this ceremony the presence of the devadasis is necessary, and they do *hulā-huli* and sing auspicious songs. It must be pointed out that it is not because of a concubine status that devadasis do not observe death pollution for the deceased king. Concubines do observe death pollution for their 'husbands'.[36] The consecration of the new king is an auspicious ceremony. The devadasis also accompany the king in his procession to the temple on the occasion of *abhiṣekha*. These facts may give us a clue as to the meaning of the local word for devadasi: *māhārī*.

The etymology that was given to me by Trinayana is that this word comes from the word *mahārāṇī*, meaning queen. This etymology is supported by two other sources. The devadasis of the Jagannātha temple in Baripadā, the capital of the former kingdom of Mayurbhanj, are actually called *mahārāṇī*.[37] In the southern districts of Orissa and the northern parts of what is now Andhra Pradesh, the name given to *māhārī*-s is *sānī*.[38] According to S. N. Rajaguru, the word *sānī* is derived from the sanskrit *swāminī*, feminine form of *swāmi*—lord or husband. According to this same authority, prior to the Ganga kings of Orissa, during the Bhauma Kara dynasty,[39] some queens of that royal family used the title of *goswāminī*.[40] In one inscription from the north of Orissa, the mother of a queen is given the title of *māhārimā* (mother *māhārī*).[41]

This epigraphical and etymological evidence points towards an identification between the *māhārī* and the queen. This is also expressed in the behaviour of both the queen and the *māhārī* at the time of the death of the king. Neither of them observe death pollution. The *māhārī* does not observe death pollution for her husband, be it the king or Jagannātha. The queen (as well as the king) does not observe death pollution for anyone in her *kuṭumba*. In this sense there is a parallel between the queen and the *māhārī*-s, and it may be here that

the latter's title, with its close affinity to the words for queen, may have its *raison d'être*. It is precisely in the characteristic of never becoming widows that the auspiciousness of the *māhārī*-s has its source. The king's death does not pollute the queen and she does not wear any of the signs of widowhood; as soon as possible after the event is known, the festive and auspicious ceremony of consecration is staged in which the presence of the *māhārī*-s is indispensable. It seems to me that besides the pragmatic considerations of the possible political troubles that could arise during a delayed transition of power, this expresses something else as well. The heir behaves as if there had been no death; it is the continuity that is stressed. For the living embodiment of Viṣṇu, death does not bring the same consequences as for other mortals.

Let me now turn my attention towards the recruitment of female temple servants. Since the devadasis are not allowed to marry, where do they get girls to continue the tradition? Can the devadasis have children?

When I first asked this question, the devadasis always told me that they never had children. Later on in my field work, I found out that sometimes they did have children, although not as frequently nor as many as married women. They did confide to me that 'they placed a contrivance in their belly' (*petaku kichhi gotāe upāya kari*). However, I was unsuccessful in finding out exactly what methods of contraception they used.[42] Out of nine devadasis, five never had children and four had, but only one of these had more than one. However, it was only later on in my field work that I found out that some of the children that the women had were their own and not adopted, as I was first told. These women told me that publicly they always say that these children are adopted. This attitude towards having children, and the low rate of birth among the devadasis, is of course in total contrast to what happens among married women who are expected and want to bear many children, especially sons.

At first I had thought that the injunction against having children must be related to the performance of their ritual in the temple, childbirth perhaps rendering them permanently impure. This is not the case, though. Having a child does not prevent a devadasi from continuing her ritual duties except for the dance ritual—*nāca sebā*—which takes place daily in the dance hall of the temple. According to what they told me they will have lost their strength for dancing after having a child. But one of them did continue to dance after her

pregnancy. However, they can continue to sing if they belong to the 'insider' class, and if they belong to the 'outsider' class, they can continue the group rituals (*mela sebā*), as well as the dance on the boats at the time of Candan Jātrā. Sanctions from the king are brought to bear only if it is established that the father of the child is from a *pāṇiaśprusya* caste (who cannot give water to brahmins, see n. 29), or is an outsider, i.e. not a resident of Puri. In both these cases the devadasi is barred entirely from performing her ritual duties and even from entering the temple. This is called *deuḷa bāsanda* (*deuḷa* means temple and *bāsanda* means ousting). To bear a child from a high caste resident of Puri is tolerated but kept quiet. Bearing a child from a brahmin *sebāka* is not frowned upon although it is also publicly said to be an adopted (*pālanti*) child.

Parents will give or sell a daughter to a devadasi in any of three circumstances: (1) the parents, or more usually the mother, may have made a vow to Jagannātha to dedicate their daughter to his service. Such a vow is made usually at the time of the illness of another child when Jagannātha is prayed to in order that he may cure the child; (2) the parents are very poor and cannot afford the expenses of marrying their daughter; (3) the mother of the girl is a widow and, finding herself pregnant, she has been driven from her house or has left it. Cases 2 and 3 were the most frequent. I know of only one case of adoption due to a vow made to Jagannātha. Devadasis will also offer money to poor parents in exchange for their daughter.[43] There is no adoption ritual. The child is simply taken to live in the devadasi's house. Some of the devadasis told me that they never used to adopt sons. Today four of them have adopted sons (the oldest among these is twenty-four years old); in each case they adopted a son of their brother. Two of these did not adopt any girl, and this was criticized by some of the other devadasis. To adopt a son instead of a daughter is one among many other signs of the changing times and the end of this tradition. I will come back at the end of this chapter to what is happening today among this group.

The devadasis still say that sons do not keep up the tradition, the *bangśa parampara*. Those who have adopted sons have done so in order to be supported in their old age, since daughters are no longer following the traditional path but are getting married.

Any girl born to the brother of a devadasi was adopted by his sister and became a devadasi. If the brother wanted to get his daughter married he had to ask for special permission from the king. I was told

that such marriages occurred extremely infrequently, until about twenty years ago when both the daughters of the devadasis and of their brothers began to get married.

Where did the brothers of the devadasis get their wives, since the women of the group cannot marry? The brothers have a form of marriage called *toḷā kanyā*. The word *toḷā* comes from the verb *toḷibā*, meaning to pluck (as in plucking a flower or a fruit). In this form of marriage, the ceremony does not take place in the house of the parents of the bride but in that of the groom. The woman is fetched before the time of marriage from her house and brought to the house of the groom. Sometimes the woman is taken years before the marriage will actually take place, when she is still a small girl. In this form of marriage there is no *kanyā dān*; the father of the bride does not give his daughter to his future son-in-law. This form of marriage therefore does not bring either merit or prestige to the parents of the woman and is practiced only among poor people who cannot afford dowries. The groom and his relatives present a sari and jewelry to the bride-to-be and bear all the expenses of the wedding. After such a marriage the usual exchanges between affines do not take place. Relationships with the bride's parental house are non-existent. In fact, I discovered rather late in my field work that the wives of four of the men had been bought as young girls from very poor parents.

The caste from which these women come must be of the *pāṇiśprusya* category as in the case of the adoption of daughters. It was impossible for me to trace the natal households of any of the wives of these men because they told me that all their relatives had died.

It was explained to me that since there was no *kanyā dān*, there was no *mātuḷa*, the ancestral line of the wife's forefathers. It all looks as if, due to the absence of *kanyā dān*, there is not the usual alliance between two lineages, that of the groom's father and that of the bride's father. We will see later that the position of the wife in ancestor worship parallels that of the natural father of a devadasi.

The sisters-in-law of the devadasis are kept in strict purdah. They should not see anyone outside their house, 'not even the sun and the moon'. When they die their bodies are put inside a silk cloth bag so that no one may see them on their way to the cremation ground. The devadasis told me, and so did their sisters-in-law, that the only other woman to be thus treated is the queen. They said that the funeral of their sisters-in-law was like that of the queen.[44] Thus the married women among the devadasi group are in these respects treated like the queen.

The complete severance of the wife from her natal group is certainly well expressed in the words *toḷā kanyā*. The bride is plucked from the tree on which she grew, and there is a severance of ties. As we will see in Chapter 3, devadasis are not allowed to go outside Puri. The absence of the normal comings and goings between affines has the effect of keeping the devadasis and their brothers in the town. Since this form of marriage carries no prestige and brings no merit (*puṇya*) people are understandably reluctant to give their daughters to these men. It is not surprising then that they sometimes offer money for a girl. The low status of this form of marriage contrasts with the funeral custom for these women as well as with their strictly segregated lives. These women are the natural mothers of future devadasis, and this may be seen as another sign indicating a link or a parallelism between the devadasis and the queen.

Let me now focus attention on the kinship organization of this group. This group of people, comprising the devadasis, their brothers, the wives of these and their children, are divided into three *kuṭumba*-s. Two of these belong to the 'outsider' (*bāhāra gāuṇi*) class and the other one to the 'insider' (*bhitara gāuṇi*) class. A *kuṭumba* in this case is made up of a different set of people than those that form the rest of society. A devadasi's *kuṭumba* includes her mother (*mā*), mother's sister (*māusi*), her mother's brother (*māmū*) and his wife (*māi*) and their children. The mother and the mother's sister are not married but they may have children. A devadasi, during the fortnight of the ancestors, will offer oblations for a line of five ancestresses whose names she must remember and invoke. If she is the natural daughter of her mother she will also invoke her father, but not his ancestors, on the anniversary of his death, not during the fortnight of the ancestors. A man will invoke his father if he is born from a devadasi's brother, his mother but not his mother's forefathers and their wives, and then four ancestresses. In case his father was also born to a devadasi's brother, he will offer oblation to his father, mother, grandfather and grandmother, and then to three ancestresses. This, however, was not the case for any of the six men for whom I had information. Three of these men offered oblations to five ancestresses, having been born to devadasis, and three of them did it for their father and mother and four ancestresses. A man's mother, if she is not a devadasi, is treated in funeral offerings like the natural father of a devadasi; their line of ancestors is not worshipped. This, of course, contrasts with the practice among brahmin servants, where the

mother's father's line up to three (and sometimes five or seven) generations is worshipped during the fortnight of the ancestors. The dominant pattern is the line of devadasi ancestresses without men, even in the case of the devadasi's brothers.

Some of the devadasis told me that only a daughter should perform funeral ceremonies because the ancestresses would not get the food and the water offered by a son. However, other devadasis have let their married brother or their married son perform the ancestor worship ceremonies. I would tend to think that with the recent trend of adopting sons, marrying one's daughters and not marrying in *toḷā kanyā*, the custom of a son doing *śrāddha* may also be of recent origin, since the whole trend is towards integration in the general patrilineal pattern.

As we have seen, on *mahālayā* day, the new moon day at the end of the fortnight of the ancestors, other people do *śrāddha* to their mother's brother. In this group it is not done. The brother of a devadasi is of the same *kuṭumba* as herself and structurally corresponds to the father's brother in the patrilineal pattern. In the case of the son of a married man, his mother's side of the family is not worshipped at all during these ceremonies. This corresponds to the situation with the living relatives of such a man's mother, with whom there are no ties. If the line of the brother's wife were worshipped it would have to be her father's line, as well as her brother. It seems as though male filiation is minimized almost to the point of non-existence, both for the men and for the women. The tradition of the group is perpetuated through women, a son is (or to be more exact, used to be) of secondary importance. He was useful in that he could produce daughters. The men have a very small share of the ritual services (*pāli*) in the temple. One man of the *bāhāra gāuṇi* class has the *mardali sebā* (drumming at the time of the dance), and another of the *bhitara gāuṇi* class has the *shankua sebā* (blowing the conch shell). Both of these *sebā* are adjunct to other ritual activities and do not have the same importance as the ritual of the women. In any case, these *sebā* occupy only two men, whereas as many as fifty women used to share the dance and singing rituals when the older *māhārī*-s were young.[45]

When a devadasi dies, the other devadasis dress her like a bride with all the signs of a married woman. Her body is carried to the cremation ground by the sons (*puamāne*) of the whole group. The three *kuṭumba*-s are to each other *maḍā sangiā bandhu* (*maḍā* means corpse, *sangiā* means association, group), that is, they come to carry

the corpse of anyone in the group to the cremation ground. It is the eldest daughter who must do the actions (*kriyā*), the most important of which is to bring the fire from the kitchen of the temple, known as *baiśnabāgni* (vaisnavite fire) and put it on the corpse's face (*mukhāgni*). All *sebāka*-s, as well as their wives, receive this fire at their cremation. But of course it is only among the devadasis that the daughter performs the funeral rites; for everyone else these must be performed by the eldest son.

The daughter is also the one who inherits from her mother, the son receiving whatever his mother felt like giving him out of affection. The devadasis used to have land granted to them by the kings, on which they paid no taxes. This property, they claimed, was taken away from them sometime back.[46] The previous temple administrator, according to some of the devadasis, had shown them records stating that the devadasis jointly owned eighteen acres of land. This man had tried to recover these lands for them but was unsuccessful. These lands were recorded in the women's names. Their brothers used to look after these lands. As one devadasi put it, 'if they go behind us then they eat' (*āme pacare jibe, se khāibe*), meaning that if their brothers worked for their sisters by looking after their lands, they could be supported, but if they did not they could not eat.

In the affairs of the group, however, the men are given equal importance. Each division (*bāhāra* and *bhitara*) has two guardians called *jāti murabi*—caste guardians—consisting of the oldest woman and the oldest man. The woman is always a devadasi, not a brother's wife. They are there to advise members of their group on matters relating to marriages, deaths, commensality, and so forth.

Although members of this group speak of themselves as a *jāti*, a caste, it is questionable whether they are so regarded by others. Other temple servants talk of the men and the women in this group somewhat differently. The brothers or sons of the devadasis are sometimes referred to as being *ajatiā* or having no caste. This is also said of the sons of the king by palace concubines. The temple servants call the sons of the devadasis by the following appellations: *beśyāpua*, son of a prostitute/courtesan, or *dāripilā* or *bedhapua*, having the same meaning. (*Dāri* means prostitute and *bedha* means adulteress.) These names amount to calling these men bastards. The devadasis themselves are called *beśya* or *dāri*. As was mentioned earlier, brahmins will not accept water from a devadasi's hand, but will accept *pān* (betel nut). Although she must come from high, water giving castes,

once she becomes a devadasi she is classified with the non-water giving castes.[47] This seems rather surprising, if not downright contradictory. Trying to clarify the issue, I always asked of my informants what caste these women belonged to, but my question was always greeted with a shrug and people said rather cryptically, 'What caste?' When pressed, some people said that they do not belong to any caste, that they are just *strī jāti* (woman caste), or like *baiśnabs*.

In a manuscript that Pandit Sadasiva Ratha Sharma owns and which he translated with me, written by a devadasi about a hundred years ago, the following lines deal with the question of caste:

> This *nijoga* called *sampradā* is not a community (*sampradāya* can also be taken in the sense of sect or caste)
>
> We are *baiṣnaba*-s, if one calls us *śūdra* his/her *dharma* will be destroyed (or broken)
>
> If we were brahmin, a *dāsī* could not stay in the vicinity (*apaḍā* also means village, settlement)
>
> If we were kshatriya or vaiśya we would practice the dharma of the housewife (*gruhī*).[48]

The devadasis themselves, when asked what caste they belonged to, at the beginning told me they were of the *karaṇa* caste. However, this was not accepted by other *karaṇa*-s whom I questioned. I think that the devadasis told me this because they are now beginning to integrate themselves into the rest of society by marrying their daughters, some of whom have married into *karaṇa* families.[49] Later on they told me that their caste was 'devadasi,' a recent appellation in Puri which these women prefer to the local word *māhārī*.[50] These two terms only refer to women. There seems to be no caste name for the group as a whole, including the men, although the men told me that for census purposes they gave their caste as devadasi. It was pointed out to me that devadasis are recruited from many different castes, but once adopted they all become one thing, and the parallel with the *baiśnab* was drawn. What is remarkable to me is that they were never referred to as being *ajatiā*. They are simply *strī jāti*. Although most of the brahmins I questioned said they would not accept water from their hands, we will see in the next chapter that in certain circumstances they do accept water from them.

We can note thus far that the kinship practices of this group are in marked contrast to its environment, which is patrilineal. The absence of the male line, the fiction that is maintained about getting children through adoption only (backed by the fact of a low rate of procreation),

the form of marriage of the men in which the wife has been severed from her patrilineal natal kin group, point to the following: it is a group dominated by women in which filiation is said to be transmitted not biologically, but through adoption; the normative denial of biological reproduction being reflected in the reproductive behaviour of these women. One cannot therefore really speak of matrilineality. This must be at the root of the difficulty or the refusal of others to assign a caste to this group. I am of the opinion that caste (*jāti*), which can be rendered as genus (same root as *jāti*) or species[51] when referring to the many different and hierarchically ordered human groups, as opposed to other species such as gender or animal species, is a property which is transmitted only in the seed (*bīrjya*) and cannot be transmitted through the *khetra* (field, woman). Since these devadasis should not actually feed any seed, they cannot be properly placed in the hierarchy of the many social groups called *jāti*. As I have pointed out in the first part of this chapter, the chastity of women has to be well guarded for the sake of reaping what one has sown. The devadasis feed no recognized seed and are not chaste. They belong to the 'woman's caste' (*strī jāti*), which in itself is not differentiated. In their case, the distinction between water giving and non-water giving castes, which creates a great divide among all the touchable castes, is blurred and confused, as will be even more apparent in the next chapter. As the social organization of this group also shows, these women represent the female category without its normal social ties to men.

Before closing this chapter, I want to give a brief account of what is happening today among this group and how the picture that I have just drawn is changing.

Today there are nine women who are not married and will not marry in the future, the oldest being close to seventy and the youngest thirty-six. Nine other women have married and are lost to the group and the tradition. The oldest married woman is forty-seven, the youngest fifteen. However, out of these nine, only the three youngest did not have their temple dedication ceremony performed when they were young girls. The others all did the ritual for several years before they got married. Three of them married within the group, two of them within the same *kuṭumba*. This is an indication of how difficult it is for their mothers to find husbands for them, since there is no tradition of marriage. Five of these marriages have been 'love' marriages, which is to say that they were not arranged by the mother.

Interestingly, two of these love marriages were with brahmin men. I am familiar with one of these cases since it was the marriage of Amrapalli's daughter with a brahmin of Puri (in the other case, that of Brundabati's first daughter, the marriage was with a brahmin in a different district). The marriage with the Puri brahmin at first aroused the antagonism of both sides. Amrapalli did not object to marriage as such, nor to a love marriage, since another of her daughters had married in that way with her blessings, but she objected because the man was from the family of their guru. Apparently the parents of the groom objected more to the fact that their son had chosen his bride himself, and thus not been properly obedient to his parents, than to the fact that the woman was a devadasi. However, I must say that I was not able to discuss the issue directly with the parents of the husband and this was reported to me by other people. However, the parents soon reconciled themselves to the union, and today the couple lives in their house, as they would if their union had been more conventional, there is no indication that the daughter-in-law is not accepted.

Another of Amrapalli's daughters married into the family of a minor tributary king. This woman, as well as the other two who married brahmins, was educated and met her future husband while they were both studying, he in college, she in high school. She was also trained in music and singing and was considered very beautiful. Amrapalli was pleased with this choice and gave her daughter a large dowry. However, the marriage did not take place in Amrapalli's house, but in the house of a former very wealthy patron of hers, and no other devadasis were invited to the wedding. The couple seems to be completely accepted in Puri, the man being a prominent lawyer in the town. The children of all these unions belong to the caste of their father.

Among the other three, one married into a *karaṇa* family. This was an arranged marriage, and the girl was Amrapalli's brother's daughter. Amrapalli told me that it was her wealthy patron who advised her to marry off her daughters, since the tradition would not be able to support them any longer. He lived part of the time in Calcutta and had many connections, which Amrapalli was able to use later on in the marriage of her daughters. She became the trend setter in her group. The first non-*toḷā kanyā* marriage was also arranged by her for her younger brother, whose wedding was celebrated in the house of the bride in a different district. Since then, most men have not

followed the *toḷā kanyā* custom. It is interesting that the two trends emerged simultaneously: the marriage of the daughters of the devadasis and the end of the *toḷā kanyā* form of marriage for the men. This would confirm my suggestion that the two are structurally related, the *toḷā kanyā* form of marriage breaking the ties with the patrilineal milieu, so that none of its features may enter the devadasi group. Now the married daughters have, of course, by the mere fact of marrying, integrated the patrilineal general pattern; they have changed their *gotra* into that of their husbands and differ in no way from other housewives.

The devadasis say that they are marrying their daughters because the tradition cannot support them anymore. They maintain that since the end of royal patronage, which occurred with the death in 1958 of Ramacandra Dev, the grandfather of the present king, everything began to fall apart. This of course corresponds also fairly closely to the takeover of the temple administration by the state government. Not only had their major source of income, royal patronage, dwindled but at about the same time it seems that the prilgrims ceased to pay much attention to them. They thereby lost both a source of income and prestige.

Today the men are involved in various jobs. One, Pankaj Charan Das, is a teacher of dance in the government school of music and dance. Three others work for the bus company that is run by the temple authorities. One works as an attendant in the municipal hospital; another as a clerk in the police department; and a third as a municipal clerk posted at the check gate at the entrance of the town. Three own a *pān* shop jointly and one is a tailor. A few among them do not have any jobs at all and are supported by relatives. One of the devadasis, Bhanumati, is a nurse in the municipal hospital. She is the only one among the unmarried devadasis who has taken up a profession, and she does not participate in any of the rituals.

Several devadasis acquired land, either from money received from wealthy patrons or by mortgaging their jewelry, or by a combination of both. Some of them are supported by the men in their families and by their lovers.

To recapitulate, the material on the kinship practices of married women and of the devadasis indicates that women, unlike men, are undifferentiated in their status. The role of the wife in conception, pregnancy and generally as the feeder of the household and of the ancestors unambiguously shows that status differentiation is not

transmitted by her but by the father. Such evidence is in harmony with the treatment of women in the *dharmaśāstra* literature where they form one category equivalent to the fourth and lowest *śūdra* class.

The necessity for marrying a woman from one's own caste arises not because the status of the children is allocated equally by the mother and the father but because the wife as the feeder of the ancestors must herself be fed the food proper to her husband's group. Caste endogamy thus revolves around the cultural significance of food rather than on bilaterality.

The devadasis who are unmarried form along with their brothers and sisters-in-law a group which has no ties with patrilineality. This group is categorized in the hierarchy along with the touchable non-water giving castes, even though their status is rather ill-defined. The devadasis are often identified simply with the 'women caste', a rather low status corresponding to the *śūdra* classification in the literature.

CHAPTER 3

Sexuality: Purity, Auspiciousness, and Status

The practices described and interpreted in this chapter come from many different sources: myths told by the devadasis, *paṇḍās* and others, rituals as well as description of practices by devadasis and others. The main pattern which I see emerging around this topic is the disjunction between the impurity of sex and its auspiciousness. Sexuality has thus two values attached to it, one negative and one positive. Hence I have divided the chapter into two sections: the first is on the impurity of sex and the second on the auspiciousness of sex. To these are added a section on the relationship that used to hold between the devadasis and the pilgrims as of fifteen to twenty years earlier. This was described to me principally by the devadasis themselves, with some corroboration from a few temple priests. In this section the discussion on the status of the devadasis initiated in the previous chapter is further investigated.

The Impurity of Sex

Sexual intercourse is considered polluting. The devadasi must refrain from it on the day of her turn of duty in the temple.[1] On that day she must take a purificatory bath, eat only pure food—which means *mahāpraśād*—and not even look at a man's face, let alone have sexual relations with him. In the manuscript written by a devadasi on the rules concerning their temple service, the following three stanzas refer to this point:

On the day of *sebā* (duty in the temple) eat pure food and
sleep on a pure mat and keep quiet.
At the time of the *sebā* if any man looks upon her with desire
That man will surely fall into the greatest hell.

If a man desires the body of a *dāsī* at the time of her *sebā*
This man, by order of the king, should be heavily fined
Such a man would be a criminal in front of the great Lord;
These customs are written in our shastras.

The gajapati king is the hope of our community
He gives us food and water
Knowing him as a god we offer our body (to him)
But on the day of our duty (in the temple) we should not even salute him.[2]

To have a pure body (*pabitra* or *śuddha deha*) means also to be chaste. Refraining from sexual activity and fasting go hand in hand and both are part of keeping or attaining a pure body. Fasting in this case means eating food only once a day from the temple. This is called *habiṣa*. Fasting, which is done, for example, on the occasion of offerings to the ancestors (*śrāddha*) is called *upabāsa*. Sexual intercourse in the temple is prohibited and would pollute the temple just like the shedding of blood, spitting and all other crossing of the boundaries of the body would.[3]

Ideally, the sexual relations of the devadasis ought to be restricted to the king and the brahmin priests. In practice, however, they often fall short of this ideal. It seems that on the whole they do not have sexual relations with non-Puri residents, i.e. with outsiders, nor with members of the non-water-giving castes. So in effect the number of eligible partners is extended to include higher caste residents of Puri.

The devadasis' sexual relationships are a private affair between two persons. This is expressed by saying that the relationships are 'secret'. This 'secrecy' does not mean that the fact is unknown or illegitimate. It means that they do not take place as part of the public festivals or life-cycle ceremonies. They take place usually in the devadasi's house, except in the case of the king, where the devadasis visit him in the palace.

These relationships are not at all like those of common prostitutes not attached to temples. The devadasis do not sell their services. Their relationships with men would be more accurately described by the word concubinage than the word prostitution. Since the devadasi is supported by the temple and the king, she does not depend on her lovers for her maintenance. She does receive gifts, sometimes very substantial ones, but these are not considered as payments for services rendered. There is no contract between a woman and a man as in the case of the common prostitute; very simply, provision of sexual services by these women is not a commercial exchange.

The king had a special officer whose function was to supervise who the devadasis had sexual relations with (this officer is called the *dosandhi paricchā*). If this officer found that the women had sexual relations with a man from a non-water-giving caste, the fact was reported to the king who had the woman punished. Such an officer still existed at the time of the oldest devadasi's mother. The attitude towards high caste Puri residents' sexual relationships with the devadasis is hard to pinpoint. Although ideally a devadasi should not have sexual relations with such men, it appears from what I was told that sanctions were brought to bear only in the case of outsiders and men from non-water-giving castes. Everyone, priests and devadasis alike, agreed that the devadasis who restricted their relationships to brahmin priests and the king, had higher prestige. It is very hard, if not impossible, to assess whether relationships with high caste men are a recent phenomenon or not. What is clear, though, is what people think the devadasis should do, and that is to restrict their sexual contacts to brahmin priests and the king.

The affairs of the devadasis often last a long time. Some of them were in the same relationship for over ten years, such as Radha and Brundabati for example. As someone put it to me, the devadasis 'are not women of a hundred beds'.

Some of the devadasis compared themselves to the heavenly courtesans (*swargabeśyā, apsaras*) who adorn the court of Indra, the king of the gods and master of the rains. In Indra's court they are for the pleasure of the gods and in this mortal world (*marttya loka*) they are for the pleasure of the worldly gods such as the king and the brahmin priests. These priests are addressed by the pilgrims as *paṇḍā ṭhākur*. *Paṇḍā* is the word used popularly to refer to brahmin priests; it does not discriminate between the various categories of brahmin temple servants; *ṭhakur* means Lord or God. Jagannātha is also addressed as *ṭhakur*. According to Trinayana, it is written in the Khetra Mahātmyā (praises of Puri) portion of the Skaṇḍa Purāṇa that 'my [Viṣṇu's] people secretly have been born in the temple' (*mamaparijanā chadua sadwamajā*) and also that 'the gods have been born in the form of men and are doing my *sebā*' (*debatāmāne manuṣa rupare janma hoi, mote sebā karucanti*). At another point in time, he also told me the following:

> When these people are temple servants, to these people it is said that they are Jagannātha's own people. With them the devadasis keep relationships but with other persons they do not have any relationships. These persons do the

work of courtesans (*beśyābrutti*) but they do it with those people. The *dosandhi pariccha* looked after this; the king also if he desired it, could have sexual enjoyment with them.

Thus it is legitimate that the earthly courtesans (*marttya beśyā*) like their counterparts in heaven, should have sexual relations with these earthly gods. However, neither the devadasis nor the *dei*-s had sexual relationships with the *rājagurus* or the high class brahmins. They do not go to their houses to sing the auspicious songs either. The *dei* put it this way to me: 'The *śāsan* brahmins don't like such extravagances. They do not like to spend for such things.' Then she quoted me an Oriya saying: 'Brahmins drink bitter water' (*brāhmaṇa pitā pāṇi khiā*) which I think captures vividly the more austere inclinations of the high class brahmins.

Brundabati says that typically they have sexual intercourse with the brahmin priests at night after they return home from the temple where they have just performed the last ritual of the day, i.e. of putting the deities to sleep (*pahuḍa*). This is the setting for one of the stories that Brundabati told me. This story 'explains' why the devadasis must wear a shawl made of silk over their shoulders whenever they participate in any ritual: 'Once on a cold winter night, Jagannātha took the shape of a *paṇḍā* and went to the house of a devadasi after the last ritual in the temple. He slept with her and afterwards he left her his silk shawl because she was cold. The next day people recognized on her Jagannātha's shawl and everyone knew what had happened. Since that day the devadasis always wear a silk shawl.'

There is another story that was frequently told to me to illustrate the fact that sexual relationships between devadasis and brahmin priests is an ancient custom. It is the story of the origin of a special food offering prepared only in the month of Kārtika (Oct.–Nov.) and offered early in the morning. This offering is called *bāḷa bhoga*. Since *bāḷa* means—among other things[4]—'hair', the following is told:

Once long ago a *paṇḍā* was spending the night in a devadasi's house. It got late for him to do the early morning ritual. The king was coming and the *paṇḍā* had to receive him at the gate with the flowers that had been offered that morning to the deities. Since the *paṇḍā* had not time to get the flower offering, he grabbed the flowers in the devadasi's hair and rushed out to greet the king and give him the flowers. The flowers had a long hair in them. The king, angry, questioned the *paṇḍā* about that and threatened to have him executed if he could not justify the presence of the hair (hair is normally

polluting). The *paṇḍā* prayed to Jagannātha to save him. The next day when the king came back he saw that Jagannātha had grown long hair. Still suspecting a ruse on the part of the priest he plucked one hair out but a drop of blood appeared on the Lord's head. Thus the *paṇḍā* was saved.

Besides the interesting identification between Jagannātha and the devadasi through the hair, this story shows that the relationship between the priest and the devadasi is tacitly approved of by Jagannātha. The story may also be saying something about the purity or impurity of the devadasi, or rather of sexual intercourse with her. The wrath of the king is due to the presence of hair which is polluting, and the hair comes from the devadasi. This hair belongs to the devadasi but its polluting effects are neutralized by the fact that Jagannātha himself grows hair. The king is led to believe that the hair in the flowers came from the deity. There is thus a link made between the hair of the devadasi and the hair of the deity. Hair (devadasi) is polluting but since it becomes a part of the deity, the pollution is neutralized.

Some priests say that the devadasi is impure (*apabitra*) at night but pure (*pabitra*) during the day. The night impurity is due to her sexual activity. However, other priests consider her always impure, a fact expressed by the refusal of the brahmins to accept water from her hand.

Sahasrakhyi told me that when the temple servants are performing their rituals, they consider the devadasis to be untouchable. If they were to accidentally touch a devadasi, they would become polluted and would have to leave the temple, and the premises would have to be purified. This might explain why the devadasis are never allowed inside the inner sanctum, whether during their ritual performance or as worshippers during the periods when the inner sanctum is opened to everyone. This prohibition does not affect the men in the devadasis' group. Although the devadasis purify themselves on the day of their ritual, it would seem that the impurity of sex lingers with them and cannot be fully removed. This interpretation is reinforced by a story Brundabati told me when I asked her why they did not enter the inner sanctum:

> In the *satya yuga*[5] the devadasis used to sleep under the bed of Jagannātha at night, in the inner sanctum. Then they only wore ochre garments (*gerua bastra*) and no ornaments, only white flowers. They did not comb or oil their hair but kept themselves just like a *sannyāsi*.[6] After the last *pūjā* the devadasi went to sleep under Jagannātha's bed and the door to the inner sanctum was

locked from the outside. In the morning the priests in charge of opening the doors would open the door and the devadasi came out. At that time the devadasi had no food at home and she prayed to God saying that she could live without food but her adopted children would die without it. At night Jagannātha went to her house disguised as a brahmin boy and gave her children food on a golden plate and said that 'your mother has sent this.' The children ate. When they finished they put the plate away and slept. When the mother returned in the morning and the children told her what had happened she understood and cried out of gratitude and devotion. When the priests searched for the golden plate and didn't find it, they thought the devadasi must have taken it. A search was undertaken and the plate was found in her house. The devadasi was arrested. On that day, at the time of the food offering when the *paṇḍā*-s were about to do the purification of the food (*cāḷu* which consists of taking water in the palm of the hand and sprinkling it around the food) he could not find Jagannātha's reflection in the water (this is a requirement before purification of the food offering can be done in the temple). The offering could not be made. The priests and the king meditated and asked Jagannātha 'what fault did we make?' Then a voice was heard and Jagannātha said: 'I myself gave food for my *dāsī*'s children. Why have you arrested her for no reason? Release her!' The devadasi was released. The king sold the golden plate and gave the money to the *dāsī*. She said: 'I don't need this money; I wear inexpensive clothes, no ornaments and eat only white rice.' Then the king told her: 'You should wear some ornaments.' She replied, 'If I wear ornaments people will think of me as bad (*karāp*).' The king said: 'But you are a human being and you should fulfill your desires, but only the *paṇḍā*-s can touch your body.' She replied: 'If that happens I will become a reproachable woman (*bhastrā*), so I will continue the *sebā* but will not sleep under the bed of Jagannātha.'

What this story shows is an opposition between chastity in the inner sanctum and unchastity outside the inner sanctum. The peculiarity of sleeping *under* the bed can be understood when one takes notice that it is associated with chastity and is implicitly opposed to sleeping *on* the bed and unchastity. With the loss of chastity the devadasi becomes reproachable and loses the privilege of entering into the inner sanctum. How this happens, how the transition from chastity to unchastity takes place is significant. Food plays the crucial role in this transition. As a chaste woman the devadasi could not feed her children. The feeding of her children by divine intervention leads to an anomalous situation: the missing plate and the arrest of the devadasi. This makes it impossible to offer food to the gods (the god's reflection in the purifying water is missing so that the food cannot be purified and offered). The (implied) smooth proceeding of offering

the food to the gods is resumed only after the devadasi loses her chastity—by royal command. Thus the initial act of feeding the devadasi's children ultimately leads to the devadasi's loss of chastity. It is necessary to be aware of the fact that the dance of the devadasi takes place at the time of the food offering. The devadasi dances outside the inner sanctum, in the dance hall when the curtain is drawn in front of the inner sanctum at the moment when the food is offered to the deities. The ornamented, i.e. sexually active (as opposed to the unornamented *sannyāsi*-like chaste devadasi in the inner sanctum as well as to the unornamented, sexually inactive widow) devadasi dances outside the inner sactum at the precise moment that food is offered to the gods. This is a ritual context. In the mythical context the gods can only be fed in the presence of the sexually active, ornamented devadasi outside the inner sactum.

Thus, sexual intercourse is polluting and because of this the devadasis are not allowed in the inner sanctum. However, the sexual activity of the devadasis seems to be connected to a 'good food' situation and the valorization of their sexual activity cannot be seen only in the negative light that its pollution would cast on it. I will now turn to an exploration of the positive side of sexual activity.

Sex and Auspiciousness

A popular exegesis of the dancing of the devadasis at the time of the food offering compares the deity to a king who is entertained during his meals by the dance of women.[7] This corresponds to what happened in the palace where, on festival days, the *dei*-s used to sing and dance at the times of the king's meals, his eating being called by the same word as the eating of the gods: *maṇoki*.

The association between dance and sex is very strong. As we will see in Chapter 8, the dance ritual is also known to stand for the last 'm' in the five m's offering of the tantric *śākta* ritual. This last 'm' is *maithuna*: sexual intercourse. Dancing and prostitution were synonymous until the 1920s when dance was removed from its traditional association and became an art accessible to properly married women of high caste.[8] Thus we see in both the ritual and the mythical contexts an association between feeding and sexual intercourse. As we saw in the previous chapter, these two activities are the domain of the wife. I argued then that the category of wife was clearly associated with her aspect of feeder. In the temple the feeding is done by

brahmin men who, because of this role, explicitly say that they are like women. The other wifely domain, sexual activity, is represented by the devadasi who is 'married' to the deity.

But the devadasi is also a prostitute, 'a reproachable woman;' she is not a chaste wife and it is this unchastity which has excluded her from the inner sanctum. It is the chaste wife who cooks food for her household and it is the men who cook in the temple. The association between the devadasi and food is an indirect one and we will presently see that her link with food is to raw food, that is to abundant crops resulting from goodly and timely rains. It would seem, then, that feeding and status cannot be dissociated, whereas sex and status can. This is also what was found in the kinship domain.

The devadasis come to the priests' houses only on the occasion of some of the auspicious life-cycle ceremonies: weddings, thread ceremonies, ear-piercing, and dedication to temple service. They are never present at funeral ceremonies, which are called inauspicious (*amangaḷa*) ceremonies. They come to sing the auspicious songs (*mangaḷa gīta*). This is their privilege; no one else can sing those songs. There are only two songs and both are descriptions of weddings. One is of Krishna's wedding and the other of Rāma's. The former is sung in the temple on the occasion of the wedding of Krishna and Rukminī (in the month of Jyeṣṭha, May–June) and the latter is sung at the priests' ceremonies. Both of these may be sung for the king's ceremonies.[9]

The fact that these songs are wedding songs sung by women whose chief characteristic is to be an *ahya* does indicate that marriage is the auspicious ceremony *par excellence*.

The devadasis always go to these ceremonies in a group of at least five, never singly. Going alone to anybody's house was an offence punishable by the king. They receive some gifts, usually in kind, of raw food and perhaps a bit of money to buy the oil to cook the food. If the patron is generous they may get a sari. These gifts are called 'good beginning' (*anukuḷa*). In the case of the king they used to receive a small fortune in silk saris and gold and silver ornaments on the occasion of weddings.

What can be generalized from the foregoing is that the devadasis sing wedding songs called 'auspicious' at ceremonies that mark the entrance of a person into a new stage of life, as well as at royal ceremonies. These ceremonies are opposed to ceremonies at the time of death which are called inauspicious. The devadasis not only do not

participate in these but they do not observe death pollution for either the king or the gods at the time of the festival of their deaths and renewal (*naba kalebara*). The devadasis' husband is the god Jagannātha as well as the king, since he is Jagannātha's incarnation.

Furthermore the devadasis sing those auspicious songs only in the houses of those persons they can have sexual relations with. As we will see below, they sing other types of songs for the pilgrims.

The devadasis are not allowed to leave the city of Puri; in their words they cannot cross the bridge called 'eighteen pillar' (*attara naḷa*) which is the main entrance to the city. They can do so only while accompanying the king. Amrapalli was punished by the king because she went to live in Calcutta with her lover. This prohibition corresponds to the one which forbids them to have sexual relations with outsiders. Their situation parallels that of the wife, the house being replaced with the city, the husband becoming a collective entity: the priests and the king. However, the wifely function of feeding is not carried out by them but by the priests who cook and offer the food in the temple. They only function as sexual partners and it would seem that it is to that aspect that auspiciousness is attached. There is, however, no overt connection made between the occasions at which the devadasis sing the auspicious songs and their sexual relations.

The connection between sex and auspiciousness is explicitly made in the case of the erotic couple (*maithuna*) represented on the walls of the temples. The story that one of the priests told about these sculptures is the following:

> These representations please Indra, king of the gods, the master of rain. He sees that in this way, through these images, the play (*līlā*) of Viṣṇu is well advertised and thus he feels like preserving the temple and the city in which they are found by sending good rains, since he is a devotee of Viṣṇu. So we get rain and thus we are able to live because food can grow. Hence this is *mangaḷa* (auspicious) for us.

In this story sexual activity brings on the rain which in turn provides food to live by. Here sexuality is associated with raw food through the rains.

The temple servant of a small and lovely Krishna temple on the bank of the Indradymna tank, told me that the two erotic pairs which are on the back wall of the temple were 'auspicious things' (*mangaḷa jinisa*). He called them '*bandha citra*'.

On the occasion of my third visit to Puri I asked the *dei* directly whether sexual intercourse was auspicious and she answered positively, saying, 'Yes, sexual union is a "*mangaḷa*", it is an auspicious (*śubha*) work.' Of all my informants she is the only one whom I could ask this question without fear of embarrassing or otherwise offending her.

These sculptures are only found on the outside walls of temples, not on the inside, a fact often remarked on by the art historians. Texts on temple architecture recommend placing these erotic couples along with other auspicious motifs such as birds, full vessels (*purṇa kumbha*), leaves and creepers on the door jambs of temples (Bhattacharyya 1963:228–9).[10] We will recall that in Puri people have their doorways painted with creepers, full pots, fish, and scantily clad young women. I have never seen *maithuna* (erotic pair) represented, but there is no doubt that the women represented are erotically appealing.

Prostitutes or courtesans (*beśyā* and *gaṇikā*) are categorized along with full jars, aquatic animals, flags (among other things) as being auspicious in several texts (Gonda 1975:236).[11] In the Viṣṇu Saṃhitā (63.29) it is further written that to circumambulate a prostitute is an auspicious observance.[12] The presence of the devadasis who are called prostitutes (*beśyā*-s), who sing the auspicious songs at the life-cycle ceremonies of the priests and the king, would seem to correspond to these earlier textual references.

The association between sex and/or the prostitute on the one hand, and water on the other, which was evidenced in the story explaining the erotic sculptures, is also made by the devadasis themselves. Some of them say that they are like the heavenly prostitutes (*swarga beśyā*, *apsaras*) who are rivers.[13]

The *dei*-s and the devadasis are also closely associated with the 'full vessels'. At the wedding of the present king, which took place in December 1978, the devadasis specifically told me that they stood on either side of the door jamb by the 'full vessels'. Coomaraswamy has associated the 'full vessels' with river deities (1971:40).

The association between the *apsaras* and water is not only made on the basis of the etymology of the word, as Coomaraswamy writes. Ethnographic evidence of the worship of *apsaras* as 'water nymphs' is reported by Sontheimer among a nomad shepherd community of Maharashtra. Sontheimer writes that: '. . . the Dhangara [shepherds] worship the *sat apsaras* or *apsaras*, the seven water nymphs, on the bank of a pond in the form of seven chalcolithic flints, after having washed the sheep' (Sontheimer 1978:2). Several priests, while retelling

me the many adventures of Amrapalli, called her a '*rohinī kuṇḍa*'. A *kuṇḍa* is a tank or a pond, and the *rohinī kuṇḍa* is a pool inside the temple compound situated in front of the temple of goddess Bimalā whose waters are considered especially auspicious. Pilgrims regularly stop by it and sprinkle some water on their head.[14]

The one time that the devadasis sing the wedding song in the temple is on the occasion of the wedding of Krishna and Rukminī, on the eleventh day of the bright fortnight[15] of the month of Jyeṣṭha (May–June). The festival begins with a ritual of the devadasis called 'bringing the water' (*pāṇi toḷā sebā*). Before the wedding takes place the devadasis of the 'inside' division receive two brass pots from the temple. They all go to seven different places collecting water from each. These are the houses of the head of the temple servants (Pāta Joshi Mahāpātra), the house of the priest in charge of opening the temple doors in the morning (Bhitaracha Mahāpātra), the house of the priest in charge of closing the temple doors at night (Talicha Mahāpātra), the devadasis' own houses, the temple of Saraswatī, located on the western side of the inner compound, the temple of Bimalā, located in the southwest corner of the inner compound, and lastly from the temple of Jagannātha. They bring the vessels full of water to a platform where the wedding will take place which is called the 'water play' platform (*jaḷa kriḍā maṇḍapa*), situated along the southern wall of the inner compound (see diagram in Chapter 6). On this platform the representative images of Krishna and Rukminī—namely those of Mādana Mohana and Lakṣmī—will be brought and the water will be used for the bath of the bride. The devadasis get to keep the two brass vessels for themselves.

The water for the bath of the bride which is collected and brought by the devadasis functions to separate the bride-to-be from her erstwhile status of virgin daughter (*kanyā*) and prepares her to enter the new status of married woman: *ahya*. The characteristic of an *ahya* is, as we have remarked earlier, to be sexually active, and it is contrasted to that of daughter on the one hand and that of widow, on the other.

In this case the association between the devadasis and water has to do with a separation from a state of sexual inactivity to one of sexual activity. Could water possibly be the link between sexual activity and food? The explication of the erotic sculptures indicate that this hypothesis is plausible. Sexual activity brings on the rains which make the food grow, which allows the people to live.

Just such a concatenation of events takes place in the myth of the seduction of the ascetic Riṣyaśringa, which is told both in the Mahābhārata and the Rāmāyaṇa, as well as in other texts.[16] The story goes like this:

An ascetic at the sight of an *apsaras* (heavenly courtesan) spills his seed in the water of a pond. A doe drinks the water, becomes pregnant, gives birth to Riṣyaśringa who has an antelope horn on his forehead. The boy grows up in the forest with his father, practicing austerities and has never met any other human beings. In a nearby kingdom there is drought due to the fact that the king had abused the brahmins. The king is advised that to stop the drought he should bring in his city the ascetic Riṣyaśringa. The king summons the courtesans who are terrified of the task, they turn pale and lose heart. But an old prostitute agrees to try. She has a hermitage built on a boat and with her daughter sails to the ascetic's hermitage in the forest. She sends her daughter to the ascetic. The woman seduces the ascetic who mistakes her for a hermit since he has never seen a woman. She plies him with delicacies brought from the city which the ascetic mistakes for fruits which are the only type of food he knows. The prostitute leaves. The ascetic's father returns and warns his son against such demons. The son however is longing for the woman who, when she returns, takes him along in the boat to the city. The king houses Riṣyaśringa in the women's quarters of the palace. Immediately Indra starts raining. Riṣyaśringa then marries the king's daughter.

In this myth the opposition between asceticism and water is twice stated. First the father of the ascetic breaks his chastity by spilling his seed in water; then the end of the son's chastity brings on the rain. In the first event, water is associated with procreation; in the second event sexual activity brings on the rains which end the drought and the famine—implied in this version but explicitly mentioned in other versions.[18] We are reminded both of the story told by the devadasis of why they do not enter the inner sanctum and sleep under the bed of Jagannātha anymore, in which their chastity was transformed to unchastity, as well as of the story explaining why the erotic sculptures are auspicious. It is also interesting to note that the prostitute comes to Riṣyaśringa on a boat and takes him on a boat (see Pl. 6). Thus water separates Riṣyaśringa from a state of chastity to one of unchastity. In all three stories chastity is associated with obstacles to proper food and the breaking of chastity to the restoration of a good feeding situation. Water is associated with (1) procreation—the spilling of the seed in the water which eventually produces a son; (2) with the separation between chastity or lack of sexual activity and unchastity

or sexual activity, as in the case of the water collected by the devadasis for the bath of the bride Rukminī and also in the case of the water which separates Riṣyaśringa from his hermitage and chastity on the one hand and the palace and unchastity on the other; and (3) with food as in the case of the rain which Indra sends, which puts an end to the drought. Or one can put this in a better way by stating that in all three cases water is associated with sexual activity, it's third form (rain) linking sexual activity with a proper food situation.

Another important theme in this myth is that of the link between the prostitute and entrance into the city or palace.[19] This theme finds its architectural parallel in the erotic sculptures found outside temples and on doorways, and its sociological parallel in the presence of the devadasis at the life-cycle ceremonies marking an entrance into a new social status. In the architectural and the mythical realm the entrance is one into the state of sexual activity. In the social realm this is true only in the case of weddings. However the association in all those cases between sexual activity and presence of food makes the devadasi both an *ahya* and a prostitute, one who represents sexual activity, and is also a symbol of general well-being basically understood as the presence of sufficient food.[20]

It is important to note that in the myth of Riṣyaśringa, it is the responsibility of the king to end the drought, and the courtesans are the king's instruments to implement this. The courtesans are the king's strongest allies in the task of ending the drought.

Sexual activity and water are the main themes in one of the major yearly festivals at the temple in which the devadasis play an important and conspicuous role. This festival takes place during the hottest period of the year, just preceding the onset of the monsoon. It lasts for forty-two days from the middle of the month of Baiśākh (April–May) to the end of Jyeṣṭha (May–June). The monsoon breaks about the middle of June in this region, and its coming coincides with the most important festival of the year—*Ratha Yātrā* (car festival).

The festival preceding *Ratha Yātrā* is called *Candan Yātrā*. Its timing connects it closely to the car festival. It begins on the third day of the bright fortnight of Baiśākh (called *akhyaya trutīyā*, the invincible third) and ends on the eve of the last day of the month of Jyeṣṭha. This last day of the month of Jyeṣṭha, which is the full moon day, is a very important day. On that day the Bathing festival (*Snāna Purnimā*) takes place, which inaugurates the car festival; it takes place during the succeeding month of Āṣāḍha (June–July). In other words,

the Candan festival ends on the eve of the beginning of the car festival, which also corresponds with the breaking of the monsoon. The beginning of the Candan festival on the third day of the bright fortnight of Baiśākh corresponds to the day when the building of the chariots which will be used during the car (or chariot, *ratha*) festival, is begun. In fact the two events—the beginning of the Candan festival and the first axe blow given to the logs which will be used in the construction of the chariots—take place at the same time. On the first day of the Candan festival, the representative images of the deities are taken outside the temple, in palanquins carried by temple priests, to the nearby Narendra tank. The procession on its way to the tank stops in front of the palace where logs for the construction of the three chariots have been kept.

The king, as the sacrificer (*yajamāna*) for this festival, is responsible for getting the wood to build the huge chariots. In the past, one of the feudatory kings sent the wood as tribute. Today, the wood is supplied by the state government, but it is still deposited in front of the palace main gate where the construction of the chariots takes place.

The temple Vedic priest (*deuḷa purohita*) and the three main carpenters are waiting by the logs. When the procession arrives from the temple, it is led by three *pūjāpaṇḍās* holding three flower garlands from the three deities. These garlands are called 'garlands of order' (*āgyāmāḷas*). Giving such a garland from the deity signifies that the deity orders the receiver to carry out the ritual or work to be done. The temple Vedic priest gives the first axe blow to each of three logs which he has previously dedicated to each of the three deities. He first gives a blow with a small silver axe. After this the *pūjāpaṇḍās* hand the garlands to the three carpenters who in turn place them on each of three logs. The temple scribe (*deuḷa karaṇa*) then ties saris around the heads of the three carpenters, after which the latter give the first axe blow with real axes. This short ceremony is called 'the good beginning of the chariots' (*ratha anukuḷa*).

Thus the beginning as well as the end of the Candan festival is related to the car festival following it. It is on the basis of this significant timing that I consider the Candan festival to be a prelude to the car festival, as well as to the beginning of the monsoon. Each of these festivals, however, are self-contained events, each with a beginning and an end. My contention, though, is that to understand the Candan festival it is indispensable to be aware of its significant timing in relation to the car festival and the onset of the monsoon. It

is precisely this connection of the Candan festival with the onset of the monsoon which makes this festival relevant to our discussion: the Candan festival displays on the ritual plane the themes I have explored on the social, architectural and mythical planes of the transition from sexual inactivity to sexual activity, namely the role of water as separating these two states as well as transforming the one into the other, and the connection of this transformation to a good feeding situation.

This festival is characterized by the devadasis with the words '*jaḷa kriḍā*' 'water play' ('*Kriḍā*': 'play' has also an erotic connotation; the expression would be more accurately translated as 'water love-play'). The word *candan* means sandalwood. Sandalwood paste is considered a cooling agent and so is water. Both of these are the distinctive marks of this festival; they are used to cool the deities during this hottest, driest season of the year. The representative images of the deities are kept in brass vessels filled with water mixed with sandalwood paste during this period.

The forty-two days of the festival are divided into two halves of twenty-one days each. The first half is called 'Outside Candan' (*bāhāra candan*) and the second half is called 'Inside Candan' (*bhitara candan*). During the 'outside' period, the representative image of Jagannātha, namely Mādan Mohan, along with his two wives, Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī (sometimes she is called Bhūdevī, the earth goddess) who are normally placed on either side of the wooden image of Jagannātha on the dais (*bedi*) in the inner sanctum, are taken in a carrier called *bimāna* from the temple to the Narendra tank. The representative image of Baḷabhadra, namely Rāmakrisna, is taken on a palanquin. The procession is augmented with a third palanquin on which images of five different Śivas have been placed. These images come from five different Śiva temples in Puri.[21] The three palanquins plus a container for flower garlands, the whole headed by the palace/temple elephant, go in a procession to the tank. There, Mādan Mohan and his two wives are placed in a decorated boat and Rāmakrisna and the five Śivas are placed in a second boat. The boats are rowed around the tank, the actual task of rowing being performed by Śūdra temple servants of the fisherman caste. The brahmin priests who accompanied the palanquins in the procession are also on the boats. On the boat of Mādan Mohan and his wives the devadasis take turns dancing and singing. The dances performed at that time combine pure dance and expressive dance and song (*abhinaya*). The devadasi

sings herself, the drummer accompanies her. The songs sung at this time are called 'boat songs' (*cāpa gīta*) and are characterized by the mood of erotic love (*srungāra rāsa*). On the boat of Rāmakrisna and the five Śivas young boys dressed as women dance. These boys are called 'one son' (*gotipua*) or 'child of the *akhaḍā*' (*akhaḍā pilā*). The *akhaḍā*-s are men's clubs, organized by neighbourhoods, where the men do physical exercizes and body building, especially wrestling. Women are not allowed in these institutions. The *akhaḍā*-s train young boys to dance. These boys perform at the time of certain festivals in the *akhaḍā*-s as well as in monasteries. They never perform inside the temple of Jagannātha.[22]

The procession to the tank and the rowing of the boats take place twice daily during the first twenty-one days of the festival. Once in the morning (*dina cāpa*) and once in the evening (*rāti cāpa*).

During the second period of twenty-one days the images are not taken to the tank but are placed in brass pots containing water scented with sandalwood, which are kept on a special platform called the 'water play platform' (*jaḷakriḍā maṇḍapa*). This is the same platform on which the wedding of Krishna Rukminī takes place during this period.

During the forty-two days of the festival the daily routine of the devadasis is greatly altered. They do not dance at the time of the food offering but at the time of 'giving sandalwood' (*candan lāgi*) after the morning and evening meals. The dance is performed in the same manner and at the same place (in front of the Garuda pillar in the dance hall) as the daily dance. The evening songs sung by a devadasi of the inner division at the time of putting the deities to sleep takes place as usual. Besides these two occasions (during the rest of the year the devadasis perform only twice daily, during the morning meal and at night) the devadasis perform twice daily on the boats and also twice daily during a time called 'fanning' (*ālatā lāgi*). The first ritual takes place once in the morning after the morning meal and before the giving of sandalwood, and another time after the evening meal. This ritual is called 'the secret ritual' (*gupta sebā*) and unlike the dance on the boat takes place during all the forty-two days of the festival. Thus during the first twenty-one days the devadasis perform on seven separate occasions and during the last twenty-one days on five occasions every day.

The 'secret ritual' deserves some attention. It is unique in many respects. It is performed by a devadasi of the inner division. Brundabati

and Devaki who belong to this group gave me detailed descriptions and so did Sahasrakhyi. It is unique because this is the only time of the year when the devadasi performs for Baḷabhadra instead of Jagannātha. Its setting is also highly unusual. The gate leading from the dance hall into the antechamber of the inner sanctum is closed. The devadasi enters through the southern door which leads into the antechamber. Normally she proceeds from the northern entrance into the dancing-hall. On this occasion she comes in through a side entrance. Everyone except for three priests is kept out of this portion of the temple, and the southern door is kept closed during the ritual. It is guarded by the astrologer who keeps track of the time with an hourglass. Before the devadasi arrives all the lights in this portion of the temple (which includes the audience hall and the inner sanctum) are extinguished. The 'eternal lamp' (*akhanda dīpa*) which hangs on a chain in the inner sanctum is taken off its hook, placed behind the dais on which the deities stand, on the floor. Since this lamp can never be extinguished, it is covered with an upturned earthen pot. Thus the area is kept in complete darkness since there are no windows. During the ritual of the devadasi, three priests sit on the dais in the inner sanctum, one in front of each deity fanning the images. Midway through the ritual the astrologer—who has been keeping track of the time for this purpose—calls out the three priests who are *simhāri*-s and they are replaced by three *pūjā paṇḍās* who also sit on the dais fanning for the remainder of the ritual. The devadasi enters and snaps her fingers until she has reached her station on the threshold of the door leading into the inner sanctum, facing Baḷabhadra. She does this to frighten away the cobras she hears hissing in the dark. Since it is completely dark she guides herself by the glow of the diamond on Jagannātha's forehead. It is a time of 'great fear' (*baḍa bhayara samaya*), one during which the devadasi has 'no blood in her body', i.e. is extremely frightened. They purify themselves much more rigorously during the forty-two days of this ritual. Their dress is different also; for this ritual they do not wear the round red powder mark (*sindura ṭapā*) but a vertical red line (*sindura śirī*) on the forehead; they do not wear red foot dye, or scented hair oil or scented flowers and lastly they do not wear ornaments which produce sound, like ankle bracelets; they push their bangles up on their arms so that they will not jingle.

When she has arrived at her place on the threshold of the entrance to the inner sanctum, the devadasi undrapes her sari so as to uncover

the upper part of her body and thus performs the ritual half naked. The ritual consists of singing a song which is a long poem called the '34 of the bathing festival'. A 34 (*cautiśā*) is a poem in which each stanza begins with one of the 34 consonants of the Oriya alphabet. This poem tells of the sorrow of the poet at not being able to witness and see with his own eyes the splendour of the bathing festival.[23] The three images are also 'naked', i.e. they wear only a thin transparent loin cloth. The story told to me by Brundabati about the origin of this ritual is as follows:

> Once there was a quarrel between Jagannātha and the Sun. The Sun said: 'I'll become so hot that you won't be able to stand it for even five minutes.' Jagannātha replied: 'All right, go ahead.' Then he closed all the doors and asked the priests to fan him and the devadasis to sing songs so that he would forget the pain of the heat.

What does this festival as a whole and the secret ritual in particular 'say'? My contention is that it is a variation on the basic themes of the opposition between heat, drought, lack of sexual activity on the one hand and water and sexual activity on the other. The festival takes place during the period just preceding the arrival of the monsoon, which is the hottest and driest season of the year. The greatly increased activity of the devadasis during this period and its association with water as in the boating festival can be seen as an activity designed to usher in the rains. As with the building of the chariots which starts at the same time as this festival, it is a preparation for the great yearly renewal festival which is made to correspond with the onset of the monsoon.

The festival begins with the boating of the representative images. On one boat the representative image of Jagannātha is placed with his two wives and it is on that boat that the devadasis sing and dance. On the other boat the representative image of Baḷabhadra is placed along with five Śivas and on that boat men dance; these men are called 'one son' or 'child of the *akhaḍā*'. Both these names emphasize the single status of these dancers. Baḷabhadra is associated with Śiva and with the nonmarried state. On that boat there are no wives, either in the form of deities that would correspond to Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī or in the form of devadasis. Baḷabhadra is not flanked by a wife on the dais on which he stands in the temple as Jagannātha is. Subhadrā, who stands on Baḷabhadra's left, is considered a sister, not a wife. The boating festival thus displays, with the arrangements on the boats, an

opposition between Jagannātha and the married state and Baḷabhadra and the unmarried state. It is against the background of this 'statement' that the secret ritual must be read.

During the secret ritual the devadasi performs for Baḷabhadra and this is the only time of the year that she does so. She is not married to him and this is indicated by the fact that she does not wear the round red spot on her forehead. Brundabati told me that once a priest objected to her wearing any *sindur* at all for this ritual. She protested, saying that devadasis are *ahya* and therefore must always wear *sindur*. The dispute was brought to the king, who settled in favour of the devadasi. The vertical red line is thus a compromise. It preserves a differentiation with the round mark of marriage without obliterating the *ahya* status of the devadasi. The same thing can be said of the treatment of the bangles which are not allowed to jingle. Baḷabhadra is single and at this time his association with Śiva is emphasized;[24] not Śiva as the husband of Parvatī, but Śiva the ascetic. The association of nakedness with asceticism is well known; in Orissa there is a strong aversion to ever being naked. It is said that a husband and wife must never see each other naked, as it is inauspicious.[25]

The devadasi stands half naked, exposing her breasts, a gesture which I understand as the seduction of Baḷabhadra by the devadasi. The unusual spatial arrangements, the darkness and the secrecy can be read to express both that this ritual stands in contrast to the usual ritual of the devadasi in which she performs for Jagannātha and that it is associated with asceticism, a condition opposed to that of house-holder and associated with the 'forest', i.e. with what is beyond the settled, ordered city or village.[26] The devadasi hears the hissing of snakes. Snakes are associated with Śiva, the fear-inspiring ascetic. The ritual is a time of great fear for the devadasis and when they speak of it, the darkness, the snakes, the fear in their voices is unmistakable. This fear is reminiscent of a similar fear on the part of the courtesans who were asked by the king to seduce the ascetic Riṣyaśringa. In fact the secret ritual, like the Riṣyaśringa myth, is about the seduction of an ascetic, and like the myth, it brings about the end of the hot, dry season. The story of the origin of the ritual explains the ritual as a device to 'beat the heat' and the song which the devadasi sings tells of the desire to see the bathing festival where 'the bathing water falling down from the Lord's face are like the torrents which flow from the height of deep black mountains . . . and the white umbrellas, fly-whisks and fans surrounding the Lord are like the lowering clouds.'[27]

The song speaks of the poet's inability to see the festival, of his deep longing to do so, and of the profound bliss that such a sight gives. Singing this song during the secret ritual clearly links it with the wish to 'see' the bathing festival, the end of heat and the appearance of rain. Thus, here in the ritual realm we have the theme of the seduction of the ascetic by a courtesan which ushers in the rains.[28] It will be recalled that during these forty-two days the devadasis do not dance at the time of the food offering. The focus is on the seduction which is the prelude to the end of drought and the threat of famine. In the secret ritual the devadasi is not associated with the wife and daily food but with the courtesan who can seduce the ascetic and thereby destroy his ascetic heat; the association between asceticism and heat is constant in all the versions of the Riṣyaśringa myth. Another motif reminiscent of the Riṣyaśringa myth is the boating. In the myth, the courtesan approaches the forest hermitage in a boat and leaves it in the same way. In the ritual, however, the boating is not directly linked with a transition between sexual activity and lack of sexual activity since it takes place for the first twenty-one days of the festival at the same period as the secret ritual.

In this festival, the devadasi plays the same role as the courtesan who seduces the ascetic and thus ushers in the rains. Although unchastity renders a woman impure, and thus unable to enter the inner sanctum or cook food, the sexuality of the courtesan is powerful for it combats the heat of asceticism. The sexuality of the courtesan insures good rains and thus the prosperity of the realm. The latter is the particular responsibility of the king and the courtesan is the king's ally. The devadasis are outside the hierarchical scheme and they can insure good crops, i.e. the production of food which, until it is cooked, is also outside of the hierarchical scheme (Marriott 1968).

In the context of the relationship between the devadasis and the pilgrims, this parallel with the king will become even more apparent.

The Devadasis and the Pilgrims

As we have already seen, the devadasis do not have sexual relations with outsiders who are the pilgrims. There is, of course, no question of life-cycle ceremonies, since these pilgrims do not live in Puri and only come on more or less extended visits. The pilgrims are able to see the devadasis during their ritual in the temple or on the road as part of the procession during certain festivals. Besides these fixed

occasions, the pilgrims could also arrange to see the devadasis either in the latter's houses or more frequently in the lodging place of the pilgrims. Let me first describe the pilgrims' behaviour on the former occasions as it was described to me both by devadasis and by non-temple servant witnesses.

During the dance of the devadasi in the dance hall of the main temple, the *paṇḍā*-s called the attention of the pilgrims to the devadasi and said that to have a viewing (*darśan*) of a devadasi is the same as having a viewing of Jagannātha. At the end of the dance some pilgrims took the dust from the devadasi's feet, others rolled their entire body on the area where she had danced, to collect on their whole body the dust of her feet. Pilgrims would place in front of her offerings of *sindur*, feet dye, bangles, saris, ornaments, money. Such worship of the devadasi could also take place when she was all dressed for the dance on her way to or from the boating festival in Narendra tank.

The pilgrims through their particular guide-priest also could arrange to have the devadasis come to their lodging house. The devadasis always went to such occasions in a group, never singly, to make the event explicitly non-sexual. There the pilgrims would proceed to worship them. They offered them a seat (*āsaṇa*). They put sandalwood paste on their forehead, placed a dot of *sindur* in the middle of it, offered them flowers, bangles, feet dye and *tulāsi* leaves. They placed the devadasis' feet on a brass tray and proceeded to wash them. The pilgrims collected the water from the tray, sipped some and kept the rest in a container to take back home. This water was treated like 'pilgrimage place water' (*tīrtha jaḷa*). The devadasis would then be requested to sing songs. The songs sung on these occasions are never the auspicious wedding songs but devotional songs. These songs are devoid of the erotic mood and are of two kinds: those called *bhajana* and those called *jaṇāna*. The word *bhajana* comes from the verb *bhajibā*, meaning 'to take the name of'; these are songs which sing the praises of the Lord. The word *jaṇāna* comes from the verb *janāibā*, meaning 'to inform', 'to tell'; these songs tell of the devotee's feelings, sorrows and desires. Before leaving, the pilgrims would present the devadasis with gifts of clothes and money, which the devadasis would share equally among themselves. The amounts given varied between ten and a hundred rupees. More money was given by very wealthy pilgrims, such as the tributary kings. One of these kings, according to Brundabati, never failed to

call her when he was in town. If she could not come due to illness or to her monthly impurity, that king would send a note saying 'your [in the respectful form reserved for superiors: *āpaṇankaru*] servant (*cākara*) sent the news to your door but you didn't come?' He would always call her to worship her, take her foot-bathing water (*pāduka*) and give more generously than others.

Some pilgrims—male or female—would come to a particular devadasi's house to worship her. On such occasions the worship could also include the offering of food, in the form of *mahāpraśād*. Since the devadasis never accept food outside of their houses, such offerings are not a part of the worship at the pilgrims' lodging house. As the food was offered the worshipper would say: '*mā khāa*' (mother, eat).[29] The pilgrims would then take what she would leave; this is called *adharāmruta*; (*adharā* means lower lip and *āmruta* means nectar).

Such worship could be performed by members of any clean caste including brahmins. When I asked if brahmins would also take the remnants of food offered to her, I was told that in the case of a brahmin pilgrim doing a food offering, the devadasi will eat everything so as to leave nothing; the devadasis further told me that 'we do not give *adharāmruta* (to brahmins)' (*āme adharāmruta dāuni*).

In this context the devadasi is considered to be 'the representative of Lakṣmī' (*Lakṣmīnkara pratinidhi*); she is also called the 'walking goddess' (*calanti devī*). The devadasis call this worship *kumāri pūjā*, 'worship of the maiden'.

The worship of the devadasis by the pilgrims is an altogether remarkable fact. The pilgrims, as we have noted earlier, address their guide-priest by the term '*paṇḍā ṭhakur*' (Lord priest); they will prostrate themselves in front of him, take the dust from his feet as well as wash his feet and sip the water from this ablution. I have also witnessed the worship of a Vedic brahmin (*śāsan brāhmaṇa*) by the wife of a temple priest in her house, in which she applied sandalwood paste on his arms, offered him flowers, washed his feet and offered him food. I have also witnessed similar worship of holy men, heads of religious institutions such as monasteries (*matha*) or ashrams. Worship of human beings appears to fall in two categories: (1) worship of brahmins; (2) worship of persons who have achieved special religious status either as heads of religious institutions or as heads of religious movements.

The worship of the devadasis does not fall into either of these two

categories. Such gestures as taking the dust from a person's feet or washing a person's feet and sipping that water are expressive of the superiority of the persons thus treated. The superiority may be one of seniority, as within the kin group, or it may be one of caste status, as in the case of the worship of the brahmins, mentioned above, or lastly it may be due to the religious sanctity achieved by a particular person. The worship of the devadasis is unusual because it is independent of status. As we have seen in the previous chapter, although the status of the devadasis is hard to define in terms of caste ranking, brahmins will nevertheless not take water from them. The brahmins in question are local temple priests or Vedic brahmins. Thus the worship is not expressive of a status difference between the worshipper and the worshipped, at least in the usual manner. The devadasis emphasized to me that the caste of the worshipper was irrelevant.

The worship of the devadasis is also clearly not to be explained by the religious status they have achieved, since it is not a particular devadasi who is worshipped but all of them, and their position is not due to a personal attainment or achievement.

In the previous chapter, we have seen that it is the fact that the devadasis are unmarried women which creates a difficulty in ascertaining a particular caste rank to them. The name of the worship as 'worship of a maiden', which is certainly unexpected when one is dealing with courtesans, must in all likelihood be understood as referring to, as well as emphasizing, their unmarried status. This is, in any case, what the devadasis themselves told me when they tried to respond to my surprise at learning the name of this worship. They told me: 'We don't marry (*bibāha huantini*); we don't have children (*samsāra karantini*);[30] we don't have a household (*gharaduāra nahī*); devotion (*bhakti*) is the one important thing for us.' It must also be remembered that this 'worship of the maiden' is not performed by the people who have sexual relationships with the devadasis but only by the pilgrims. It may be that the terms '*kumāri*' and '*kanyā*' which we translate as 'maiden', 'virgin', may primarily refer to a social status, that of being unmarried, and acquires the connotation of actual physiological virginity by association since most unmarried young girls are in fact virgins. In this respect it may be relevant to note that one of the names of the goddess Durgā is '*kanyā*' or '*kanyā kumāri*' (Danielou 1964:267); she is thus called in the myth of her origin in the Skaṇḍa Purāṇa (O'Flaherty 1975:245–6) among other places. Durgā is a mature woman but in the myth of her creation she

is not married; she appears fully formed from the flames arising of the combined anger of all the gods, ready to do battle.

Just as caste status was found not to apply to the devadasis in the investigation of the social context, in this context the usual status connotations of worship of persons do not apply either. Are we to conclude from this that in this case the gestures of worship do not imply superiority? I do not believe that such a conclusion would be correct. The devadasis are considered as the 'representatives of Lakṣmī'[31] or as the 'walking goddesses' and the temple priests tell the pilgrims that a viewing of the devadasi is equivalent to a viewing of Jagannātha. This indicates that the devadasis are treated not as high status people in the manner of the temple priests who, although worthy of worship, are not considered to be the embodiment of Jagannātha, but in a manner akin to the king. The king is the only person who is considered to be an embodiment of Jagannātha himself, and he is called '*calanti viṣṇu*', 'walking Viṣṇu', a term exactly parallel to that of '*calanti devī*'. The king is treated in a manner which parallels that of the worship of Jagannātha. This will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

The devadasis are very closely linked to kingship. The link is a double one: (1) the king is the fountainhead of the auspiciousness of the realm and the devadasis are the harbingers of auspiciousness; (2) the king, as will be argued in Chapter 4, is outside of the *varṇa* scheme and thus of status ranking. This fact is explicitly mentioned in the *Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa* (I.108–109 and II.71–1–11). The reference is given by Inden who writes as follows:

> Accounts of the origin of kingship in the Purāṇas (and other texts, too) say much the same thing, namely, that the four *varṇas* were generated out of the body of the Cosmic Man *prior* to the creation of the king who was fashioned in order to uphold the codes of conduct of the castes (*varṇa-dharma*) (Inden 1977:47).

The devadasis, similarly, are outside of the *varṇa* scheme. They are taken from many castes but become one thing after joining the group of the devadasis. They are hard to classify in a hierarchically ordered ranking system. The brahmins won't take water from them, but they will drink spirituous beverages in their houses. The *dei* told me that it is in their houses that they enjoy themselves: 'These persons cannot drink wine or eat in our houses but when it is not their turn of duty in the temple they come and request us to prepare food. We won't ever say that they did it; it is not done publicly.'

The drinking of spirituous liquor is in ancient texts linked with both kingship and weddings. This is what Gonda writes on this subject:

> Thus it becomes clear that not only lordly power, but also the essence of nutritious food, the essence of water and useful plants, any refreshing draught, a well-nourished condition, and generative power are expressly enumerated among the manifestations of royal power: *kṣatrarūpam tat* (note: Aitareya Brāhmaṇa 8,7,10). An illuminating illustration of the character of these manifestations of *kṣatra* is also afforded by the inclusion of *surā*—"spirituous liquor" among them (note ibid. 8, 8, 5). Spirituous Liquor—which was forbidden to brahmins—is often said to help love; hence the custom (note, mentioned in Gobhila's Gṛhya Sūtras 2,1,10) to sprinkle a bride with it; so that her whole body is moistened with it; hence also the belief that drinking helps to stimulate the generative powers in nature . . . The state or grade of 'hotness' of these drinks, though dangerous to brahmins, was apparently believed to be congenial to members of the kṣatriya order (1956:43–4).

Weddings, wine, and kingly power are all associated in the texts referred to by Gonda and so are they in Puri. The wine bath of the bride is not done today but an echo is found in the fact that wine is drunk in the houses of those women who are so intimately connected with weddings: the devadasis and the *dei*.

In our discussion of the left-handed tantric ritual, we will see that in the ritual text wine is called 'the messenger of Kāma'. Kāma is the god of desire. Thus wine would seem to be connected specifically to erotic desire, to the sexual aspect of marriage. Wine drinking, as is well known, is classified in the *dharmaśāstra* literature as a 'great sin' (see Manu IX 235, and XI 55) and it is particularly forbidden to brahmins. Perhaps a parallel can be drawn between the 'fallen' status of the devadasis who through unchastity have become 'reproachable' and the 'sin' of drinking spirituous liquor and see both of them as placing the person outside of purity but linking him/her with sexuality and auspiciousness.

The brahmin temple priests will drink and eat in the *dei* and the devadasis' houses. The devadasis can be worshipped by brahmins. Rank ordering is impossible to establish in this case. They, like the king, are outside the *varṇa* scheme, the hierarchical ordering of society; and like him, are intimately associated with auspiciousness in the form of good rains and crops.

Part II

THE DEVADASIS AND THE KING

CHAPTER 4

The King: Divinity and Status

At the end of the last chapter, a parallel was drawn between the king and the devadasis. The king is called *calanti viṣṇu* and the devadasis are called *calanti devī*. The priests used to tell the pilgrims that viewing a devadasi was equivalent to viewing Jagannātha. Since the king is considered to be the living embodiment of Jagannātha, there is indeed, in this usage, the idea that the devadasis and the king have something in common.

The devadasis are closely linked to kingship: their morning ritual in the temple is called a 'royal offering' (*rājopacāra*). The devadasis themselves are categorized by temple priests among a series of royal insignia.[1] The devadasis, furthermore, are among the very few temple servants who perform rituals in the palace as well as in the temple.

I have argued that the status of the devadasis, like that of the king, was anomalous and ill-fitting in the hierarchy of caste. The divinity of the king and his status in the caste and/or *varṇa* hierarchy have to be explored in detail. The question of the divinity of Hindu kings needs close attention given the views of Dumont on the secularization of kingship since ancient times (Dumont 1970a). Herman Kulke, who has made a study of Orissan history, follows Dumont in stating that the divinity of the Orissa kings was a post-sixteenth-century phenomenon, the result of the loss of empire at the hands of the Muslims, Marāṭhās, and lastly British invaders. The use of the expression *calanti viṣṇu* and of other expressions indicating the divinity of the king must be looked at in their historical as well as contemporary contexts. The practices involving the king must be described in order to evaluate his position in the caste and/or *varṇa* hierarchy.

The divinity of the king

The relationship between the king and Jagannātha was established by the founder of the Ganga imperial dynasty Coḍaganga. Coḍaganga

conquered central Orissa around AD 1112 and unified the whole eastern region from Bengal in the north to the Godavari delta in the south. He established his capital at Jajpur in central Orissa and began the construction of the temple in Puri, dedicated to Puruṣottama. At that time Coḍaganga took up the new title of Cakravartin which up to now had been a prerogative of the Cōḷas of South India. The height of the tower of the temple of Jagannātha is 218 feet, exactly the same as that of the Rajarajesvara temple of the imperial Cōḷas in Tanjavur.[2]

The meaning of the term cakravartin is discussed as follows by Gonda: '. . . the term cakravartin—the title of the emperor who according to the later belief (cf. e.g. Brāhmaṇḍa Purāṇa 1, 29, 78) consisted of a part of Viṣṇu, i.e. was a partial incarnation of that Supreme Deity' (1957:144). The reference to the Brāhmaṇḍa Purāṇa situates this 'later belief' no later than the 11th century (cf. Dimmitt and van Buitenen 1978:3, 5), a period antedating Coḍaganga's reign. Already at the time of the first imperial ruler of Orissa, embedded in the term cakravartin, was the notion of the king as a partial incarnation of Viṣṇu.

The deity in Puri—Puruṣottama—had not yet become the state deity. The Gangas throughout the twelfth century retained Śiva as their state deity. It was under Anaṅgabhīma III (1211–38) that Puruṣottama of Puri became the state deity of the Ganga empire. In an inscription of AD 1216 Anaṅgabhīma III calls himself both a 'deputy' (*rāuta*) and the 'son' (*putra*) of the three deities of the temple, namely Puruṣottama, Rudra, and Durgā.[3] In later inscriptions the relationship between the king and Rudra and Durgā is abandoned, thus inaugurating an exclusive link between the sovereign and Puruṣottama, the deity of Puri.

In an inscription of 1230 Anaṅgabhīma calls himself the 'son' of only Puruṣottama and in an inscription of that same year commemorating a donation made by Anaṅgabhīma's wife to a temple in Kāñchīpuram, one of the Cōḷa capital, it is said that the donation was made 'by the order of Lord Puruṣottama'.[4] An inscription of 1237 in Puri begins with the following praise of the 'prosperous and victorious reign of [the god] Puruṣottama.' And in one of Anaṅgabhīma's last inscriptions of 1238, his regnal year (*anka*) is given as the regnal year of Lord Puruṣottama (Kulke 1978a:152).

This identification between the king and the state deity reached its fullest form under Anaṅgabhīma's son Narasiṃha I (AD 1238–64). Narasiṃha was the first Orissan king to take the title of 'lord of the

Elephants' (*gajapati*), a title which is still used by the present king of Puri and by which he is referred by the mass of pilgrims during the yearly car festival. This title parallels that of the kings of North India and of South India. The former called themselves 'Lord of Horses' (*aśvapati*) and the latter 'Lord of Men' (*narapati*).

Narasiṃha built the temple to the sun at Konarak. This was the largest temple in India and was dedicated to an all-India deity. Several sculptures in that temple depict the king worshipping the trinity mentioned in Anaṅgabhīma's inscription: Puruṣottama, Rudra and Durgā. The central place in the trinity is Puruṣottama—whereas today the central place is occupied by the goddess—but the king is represented as bigger than the deities and the surrounding entourage. In another sculpture from Konarak (now in the National Museum of Delhi) King Narasiṃha is represented seated on a swing on the 'swing-platform' (*doḷāvedi*) in front of a temple. One of his legs dangles down from the swing and his foot is worshipped by a group of female devotees who are kneeling. Outside of the Jagannātha temple there is such a *doḷāvedi* on which a swing is attached at the time of the 'swing festival' (*doḷāyātrā*). There the representative image of Jagannātha, namely Mādan Mohan (a name of Krishna), is placed and the pilgrims file in front of it. Both the epigraphical and the iconographical evidence strongly suggest that the king is considered as a personification of the deity.[5]

The appropriation of the title 'lord of the Elephants' and the building of the huge Konarak temple dedicated to an all-India deity express the all-India claim of the Gajapatis to be the foremost rulers of India in the wake of the Muslim conquest of Northern India and the disintegration of the Cōḷa empire in the South.

The successors of Narasiṃha I did not continue his Sun cult but reverted to an exclusive focus on the cult of Jagannātha. The first epigraphical evidence for the name Jagannātha dates from 1309 and 1319, in two inscriptions of king Bhānudeva II (Kulke 1978:16). The name Jagannātha—meaning 'Lord of the World'—expresses better the kingly nature of the state deity and the godly nature of his earthly representative the king, than the appellation of Puruṣottama, meaning 'Supreme Being'.

From that period dates one of the most well-known texts in praise of Puri as a place of pilgrimage (*tīrtha*); this is the Puruṣottama Mahātmya of the Skaṇḍa Purāṇa (early fourteenth century). In this text the cult of Jagannātha and the legend of its founding by King

Indradyumna is described and praised. The Gajapati kings were seen as the successor of the founder king Indradyumna who continued his great work and who are the representatives of Jagannātha. This is what Kulke has to say about the influence that such texts had:

> The more imposing the splendour of the divine overlord in his temple became, the more legitimate was the luxury of his earthly deputy in his palace. It was the network of the great places of pilgrimage, which were all richly endowed by royal donations, that played a most important role for the legitimation of kingship during the heyday of the great regional Hindu kingdoms. The message of the greatness of the royal gods and divine kings in their temples and palaces was transmitted by the pilgrims even to the most remote villages of the country (1978:17).

The Ganga dynasty came to an end in 1435 when Kapilendra, the descendant of a small ruler usurped the Gajapati throne by defeating the weak king Bhānudeva IV. Kapilendra founded the Sūryavaṃśa dynasty which continued the same policy as that of the Gangas, and enlarged the empire. By 1464 Kapilendra had extended his kingdom from the Ganges in the north to the Kaveri south of Madras and had become the most powerful Hindu king in India. In his inscriptions, Kapilendra stated that he was elected by Jagannātha and threatened his opponents with the anger of the god. 'Any opposition and attack against the king was thus an offense and treachery (*droha*) against Jagannātha, the "Lord of the World" Himself' (Kulke 1978a:205). It is likely that as an usurper Kapilendra needed a special legitimation which he found by calling himself the 'elected' of Jagannātha.

In an inscription of 1464 from Puri Kapilendra asks the help of Jagannātha before embarking on an expedition against rebellious chiefs: 'Oh Jagannātha! Thus prayeth thy servant (*sevāka*). Throughout the kingdom I maintained from childhood these feudal lords including the infantry and cavalry and gave them wealth. All of them have forsaken me. I shall deal with them and punish them each according to his desert. Oh Lord Jagannātha! Thou judge this fact whether I am right or wrong' (Kulke 1978a:205). This is the first evidence for the kings of Orissa calling themselves 'servants' (*sevāka*) of Jagannātha. This title is still in use today; the king of Puri is called the 'first servant' (*ādya sebāka*) of Jagannātha.

One of the most important duties (*sebā*) of the Gajapati is the ritual sweeping of the three chariots at the time of the yearly car festival. The first historical evidence for this ritual dates from the reign of Kapilendra's successor Puruṣottama (1467–97). In the Kāñcikāberi

legend, king Puruṣottama wanted to marry the princess of Kāñcī but was rejected by her father because the king of Orissa was a sweeper. Puruṣottama decided to wage war on the king of Kāñci and eventually won with the help of Lord Baḷabhadra and Jagannātha.[6]

Puruṣottama is credited with the composition of the first manual codifying temple rituals. This text is called Gopālārcanavidhi.[7] The belief that the king is the final judge of ritual procedures in the temple is still very much alive today. During the Herā Pancami ritual at the time of the car festival I overheard one temple servant telling another—who was late in bringing water for the purification of the hands of the officiating priest—that if the king was still running the temple he would have had this man's hand cut off.

Puruṣottama is called 'the incarnation of a part of Viṣṇu (*Nārāyaṇa aṃśāvatāra*) in Sanskrit verses of blessing found in the Oriya text called Cakadābhasāna (Dash 1978a:219). Dash argues that the idea of the king as an incarnation of Viṣṇu-Jagannātha was not popular at the time of Puruṣottama because Caitanya is called 'mobile Jagannātha' (*sacaḷa Jagannātha*) and there can evidently not be two 'mobile Jagannāthas'. In the first place, Caitanya came to Puri in 1510 (S. K. De 1961:89). Moreover, even if they were contemporaneous, one should not assume that it would have been 'ridiculous'—to use Dash's word—to have two mobile Jagannāthas. Without a cultural analysis of the concept of 'mobile Jagannātha' one cannot assume that it can only be embodied by one person.

One of the last inscriptions of the imperial Gajapatis, before the fall of the Orissa empire in 1568, reiterates that an attack on the Gajapati is an attack on Lord Jagannātha. This inscription of King Govinda Vidyādhara, who usurped the throne of the rightful heir of Pratāparudra Deva by murdering his sons in 1541–2, is inscribed on the Jayavijaya door inside the temple of Jagannātha and reads as follows:

> Oh Jagannātha! without [my] coming in order to behold Thy Lotus Feet all is hell. In regards to the gifts of pilgrims whether belonging to this country or to a foreign country up to the vicinity of the Vindhya and Udaygiri mountains . . . the Gaḍjāta kings [tributary kings] . . . should observe . . . He who violates this, rebels against Lord Jagannātha [the inscription is badly damaged] (Kulke 1978a:208).

Before turning to evidence of divine kingship in post imperial Orissa, I would like to supplement the foregoing historical evidence with Indological studies on the subject of the divinity of Hindu kings in pre-Muslim India.

Kane (Vol. III, pp. 23–5) cites various texts in which it is stated that the king has in him parts of several deities.[8] Kane also mentions the practice of addressing kings as *deva* (god) in Sanskrit dramas. Kane's view on the subject can be summarized in the following passage:

> The phrase 'nā viṣṇuḥ pṛthivīpatih' is well known and may be interpreted in two ways viz. the ruler of the earth is Viṣṇu incarnated as man or no king is not Viṣṇu i.e. every king is Viṣṇu (Kane, Vol. III:25).

Gonda's opening sentence in his article 'Ancient Indian Kingship from the Religious Point of View' states that 'In India the divinity of kings, however small their domain, has always been accepted by the masses' (Gonda 1956:36). Further on in the same article Gonda specifies that:

> It is therefore no happy idea to sharply distinguish between the religious and the secular aspect of kingship, the former requiring from the monarch certain acts for propitiating gods and unseen powers and removing dangers coming from them with the help of the purohita and sacrificial priests, the latter including all acts that lead to prosperity of realm and subjects. Nor can the view be satisfactorily substantiated that the doctrine of the king's divinity had mainly developed under foreign influences in the Kushana period . . . .
>
> In examining the status of the ancient Indian king from the religious point of view we should never forget that he is called and considered a *deva*-, that is to say, not God, the sole Eternal Lord and Creator of all things, nor his Son or representative, but one of a class of powerful beings, regarded as possessing supernormal faculties and as controlling a department of nature or activity in the human sphere. King Parikṣit, the Atharvaveda for instance states, was a 'god among men' (20, 127, 7) (1957:56, 59).

Again, Duncan Derrett, in an article criticizing Dumont's theory of Indian Kingship, writes:

> There is not the least doubt but that the king, as actual ruler, was a surrogate for various deities, and needed to function, periodically, as a ritual agent of the people in relation to nature; and apart from that, he must take steps to see that no ritual performances on the part of the public are neglected, lest the rains fail . . . . As I have said, one should not be misled by the tone of the *arthaśāstra*. It is a work devoted to the study of what a well-organized kingdom could well display, of the means it could well employ. *Daṇḍa*, though a practical thing, can well be used for a superstitious purpose—e.g., to punish those who refuse to perform their penances. *Artha*, though it boils down to money, can, and indeed must, be used in part to maintain those whom charity directs as objects of the king's bounty, e.g., widows, orphans, poor brahmins. By sustaining those who have no patron, he acquires merit

(cf. Manu V. 93, VII. 306) . . . . So on both accounts the secularization of the ruler's function is a myth (1976:605).

The role of the king in ritual performances designed to ensure good and timely rains will be discussed in detail in later chapters. Now I intend to focus exclusively on the question of the divinity of the king and the advisability of separating kingship from the religious domain and categorizing it as a secular function. Dumont has argued that under the influence of the heterodox renouncers kingship became contractual and that men came 'finally, in order to preserve property, to elect one of themselves as Mahasammata or 'Great Elect', who will be charged with the maintenance of the social order and as retribution will receive part of the crops' (Dumont 1970a:74). And furthermore for a contractual kingship to be conceivable 'kingship had first to be secularized' (ibid.:73).

On the election of the king we can examine the case of the man who established himself as king of Orissa after the fall of the empire. In 1580–1, Rāmacandra was elected king of Orissa by the ministers and grandees of Orissa (Kulke 1978a:325). This election did not prevent Rāmacandra from being able to inherit the Gajapati title and ideology. By his ritual action of renewing the cult of Jagannātha after the sacking of the temple by the armies of the Bengal sultan and arranging for the ceremony of the New Body (*naba kalebara*), he was acclaimed by the priests of the temple as the 'Second Indradyumna'. Rāmacandra was considered in the same light as his imperial predecessors and the point of the ceremony was to stress the continuity of the kingship and the cult since time immemorial.

This example confirms what Gonda writes about the subject of the election of the king:

It is difficult to agree with those who would consider this prototype of the elected king—the election of a monarch is indeed often mentioned—to be an argument for the thesis that kingship was a purely human or secular institution. First, how a particular king acceded to the throne was one thing, another what were the ideas connected with kingship in general, with its essence and with the place it occupied in the scheme of things and the order of the world. Then, the very account of Manu's election expressly stated first that in crowning a king it is Indra who is crowned (Mbh. 12, 67, 4:30ff); a man who strives after his own prosperity (*bhūti*-) should adore the king as he adores Indra himself, and secondly, that as soon as Manu accepted to be king he was enbued with great energy (*tejas*) with which he seemed to shine . . . . Thus it is the living representation of the royal function among men which inspires awe and veneration, irrespective as to how he had acceded to the throne (1957:153).

The other part of the contractual relationship involving the king is in Dumont's theory the payment of the king with part of the crops for his services of protection and keeping the peace. Gonda gives a very different interpretation from that of Dumont in the issue of the payment of the king:

> As one of the aims of gifts to men and to gods is that of buying peace it may be observed that the term *bali-* used for 'tax' or 'royal revenue' is also very often applied to any offering or propitiatory oblation to gods or semi-divine beings, household divinities, spirits and various creatures including even lifeless objects. Another word for tax, toll, or customs, *śulka-*, under other circumstances denotes the so-called marriage-gift or bride-price; the *śulka-*, in my opinion, is a transfer of property to which a mystic power is attached which establishes community, redresses a balance of power, or at least binds the recipient (1957:46–7).

This examination of the use of the words for tax—to which I shall return later when discussing the nature of the power of the king—makes it clear that exchanging wealth for services does not necessarily preclude the transaction from being a religious one. So much so that *bali* are offered to divine beings, in particular to ancestors to buy peace (cf. Veena Das 1977:100).

The conquest of Orissa in 1568 by the armies of the Afghan sultan of Bengal brought an end to this last of the Hindu empires. The Gajapati was killed, the temple of Jagannātha sacked, and the images destroyed. Due to a rivalry between the Moghul emperor Akbar and the Bengal sultan, a local ruler was able to carve for himself a territory in Orissa around the town of Khurdā, fifty miles north of Puri. Even though this man—Rāmacandra—was elected king of Orissa, his claim to the succession of the Gajapati dynasty was challenged by a relative of the last Gajapati who ruled a small kingdom to the south of Orissa. In order to legitimize his claim to the Gajapati title, Rāmacandra renewed the cult of Jagannātha by bringing his image of Jagannātha from Khurdā to Puri. Akbar as well as the Oriya people acknowledged Rāmacandra as king '[b]ecause it was him who had proved himself as an able military leader and who was highly respected by the Oriyas for his daring and quick renewal of their national cult' (Kulke, ibid.:327).

Furthermore Akbar granted Rāmacandra as fiefs all the erstwhile feudatory states of central Orissa (see map pp. 128, 129), giving Rāmacandra power over a territory of 13,000 square miles (ibid.:328).

The period lasting from the reign of Rāmacandra to the conquest of

Orissa by the Marāṭhās in 1751—called the period of the Khurdā Rājās—was marked by an increasing involvement of the kings in temple rituals. In the first part of the seventeenth century Rājā Narasiṃha III had a palace constructed in Puri. This palace is now in ruins; it is called the 'old palace'. The rājās of Khurdā resided more and more frequently in Puri, paving the way for their permanent move to Puri in the nineteenth century when the present palace was built. The Khurdā rājā then became the Rājā of Puri. At the same period several reforms were made by the king in the Jagannātha cult, all designed to embody in a ritual medium the close relationship between kingship and the temple. These reforms instituted a mode of palace and temple organization which lasted till the eve of independence. It was described to me by several informants. It is from that time that the king appointed one of his *rājaguru* as temple administrator and its 'great examiner' (*baḍa paricchā*). Trinayana traces his lineage to that period.

These reforms inaugurated a rather complex system of ritual and socio-economic temple-palace relationships. The daily rituals at the palace paralleled those in the temple: food offerings in the temple were brought several times a day to the palace and were called *rājābhoga*. In 1642 Narasiṃha III ordered the compilation of a book of rituals: 'This text mentions explicitly the share of the offerings which were due to the rājās (*rājā-praśāda*) after each ritual. Till today the *rājā-mahāpraśāda* which is sold to the pilgrims is one of the main sources of income of the Rājā of Puri' (ibid.:332).

The use of the cult of Jagannātha to legitimize the first Khurdā rājā's claim to the Gajapati title as well as the subsequent tightening of the relationships between the Khurdā rājās and the temple were all developments which took place in the context of a marked decrease in political and military power. Professor Kulke has interpreted these historical facts as evidence of the use of religion to bolster a weak sovereign. Specifically, Kulke has argued that the divinity of the king was a new feature introduced at that time to offset the king's loss of political power:

> The Gajapatis became known as *thākur-rājās* (*Deva-rājās*) only under the weak Khurdā-Rājās and their most honorary title of *Calanti Viṣṇu* (moving Viṣṇu) seems to be not older than the late 19th century when the Puri Rājās had completely lost all their political power . . . The development of the religious legitimation of the Gajapati kingship was thus characterized by an increasing ritualization and a tendency towards temporary divinization of

the Gajapatis. This development, however, was accompanied by, and the direct consequence of, a constant decrease of political power. In the context of Hindu kingdoms actual divinization of kings seems to have been primarily a compensation for the loss of political power (1978:23, 26).

The increased involvement of the palace in temple rituals and the fact that, according to Kulke, 'temple servants had to serve in the palace' (1978a:332) as well as the increased use by the Khurdā rājās of the cult of Jagannātha for purposes of legitimization, is the evidence that Kulke musters to argue that divine kingship is not part and parcel of the ancient ideology of Hindu kingship but is a relatively recent innovation.

The evidence for the imperial period, along with indological research on the ideology of kingship, points rather to the fact that Hindu kings have always been thought of as embodying a divine power. The intensification of kingly involvement in temple rituals after the fall of the empire is indeed a new development which can most probably be related to the king's loss of territory and political power. Whether this development constitutes a radically new departure from the older conception of kingship remains to be established. In order to understand the nature of the new relationship between the palace and the temple that was instituted in the seventeenth century, a close examination of palace organization and its relationship to the temple is necessary. My information comes mostly from the *rājagurus*, the *dei*, and the devadasis.[9] It is a description of what palace organization was some thirty years ago, when the tradition started by the early Khurdā rājās finally ended.

In the words of one of the *rājagurus*: 'very few persons do both the *sebā* of the palace and the temple'. The two *rājagurus* of Puri were separately interviewed on this topic and they both said that since around 1925 when Rāmacandra Deb came to the throne most of the palace servants were dismissed probably due to financial difficulties. The great majority of palace servants were *śūdras*, with only a few brahmins. They were unable to give me any figures but what is clear is that the proportion between brahmin and non-brahmin servants in the palace and the temple were inverted. According to the record of rights there were in 1954 1,021 brahmin *sebākas* and 326 non-brahmin *sebākas* carrying out ritual duties in the temple.[10] We do not know the exact number of palace servants before 1925, but the general order of magnitude is estimated at two to three hundred out of which only about twenty or so were brahmins. Those brahmins, of the

pūjāri class, that is the same class as the temple brahmins, were employed for the performance of the worship (*pūjā*) of the various deities in the palace and for cooking in the palace kitchen. By deities in the palace is meant images, not the king. The king is never worshipped by brahmins. I will return later to the relation between the king and the two classes of brahmins: the *pūjāris* (who do the worship of images) and the higher brahmins, locally known as *śāsan* brahmins.

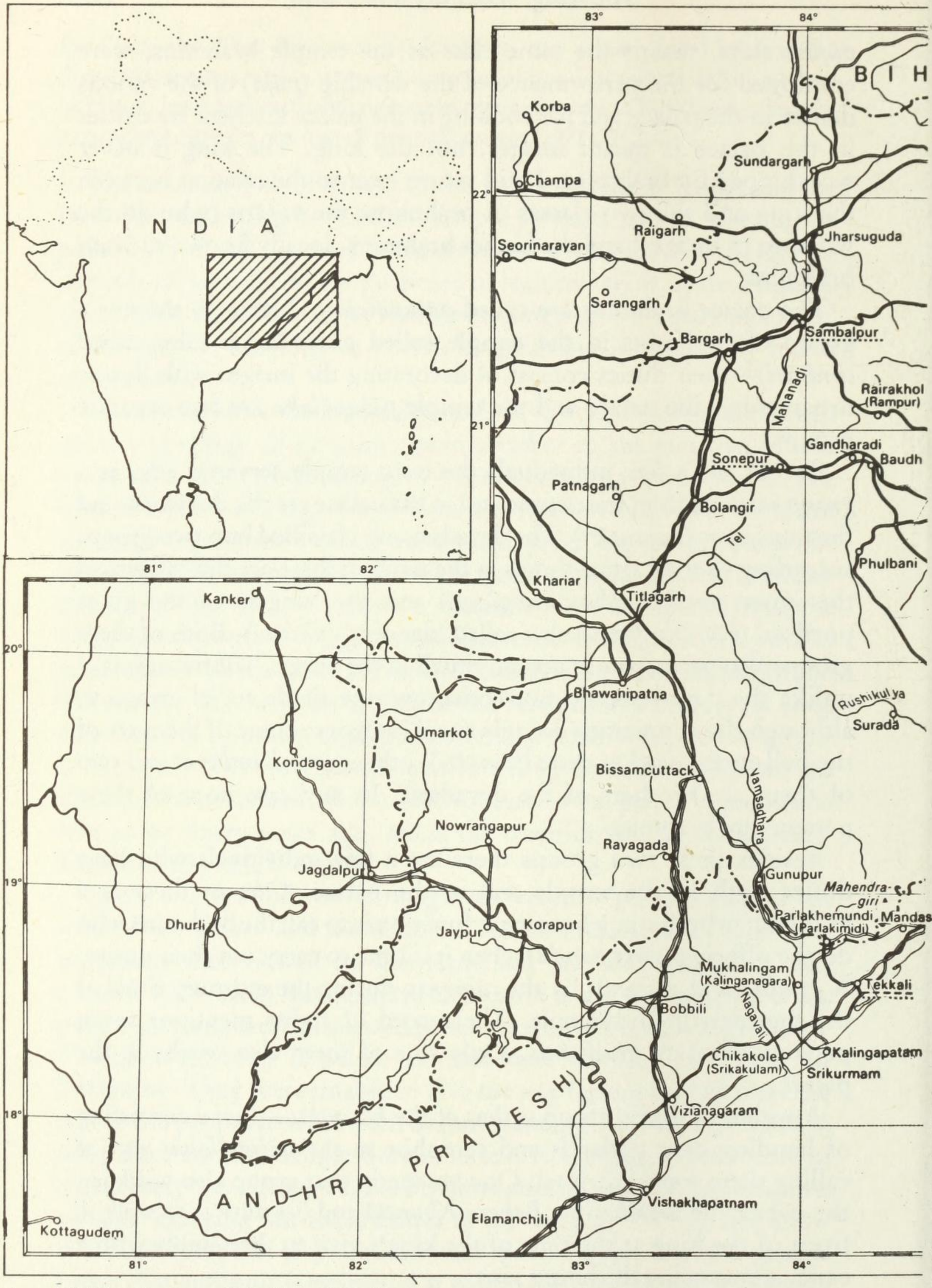
The palace brahmins are called *pāśupālakas*. Although there is a group of brahmins in the temple called *pāśupālakas* (also called *simhāri*)—their duties consist of decorating the images with flower ornaments—the palace and the temple *pāśupālaka* are two separate groups.

Except for a few individuals the only temple servants who as a *group* serve both in the temple and in the palace are the devadasis and the musicians (*bajantāri*). The devadasis are classified into two groups according to their ritual duties in the temple; these are the 'singers of the inner portion' (*bhitara gāuṇī*) and the 'singers of the outer portion' (*bāhāra gāuṇī*) also called 'dancers' (*nācunī*). Both of these groups also participate in certain rituals in the palace. The musicians,[11] unlike the devadasis, do not constitute one single social category, although they constitute a single ritual category. Some of them are of the bell-metal worker caste (*kansāri*), others are *khandāyat* and two of them are brothers of the devadasis. In any case none of these persons are brahmins.

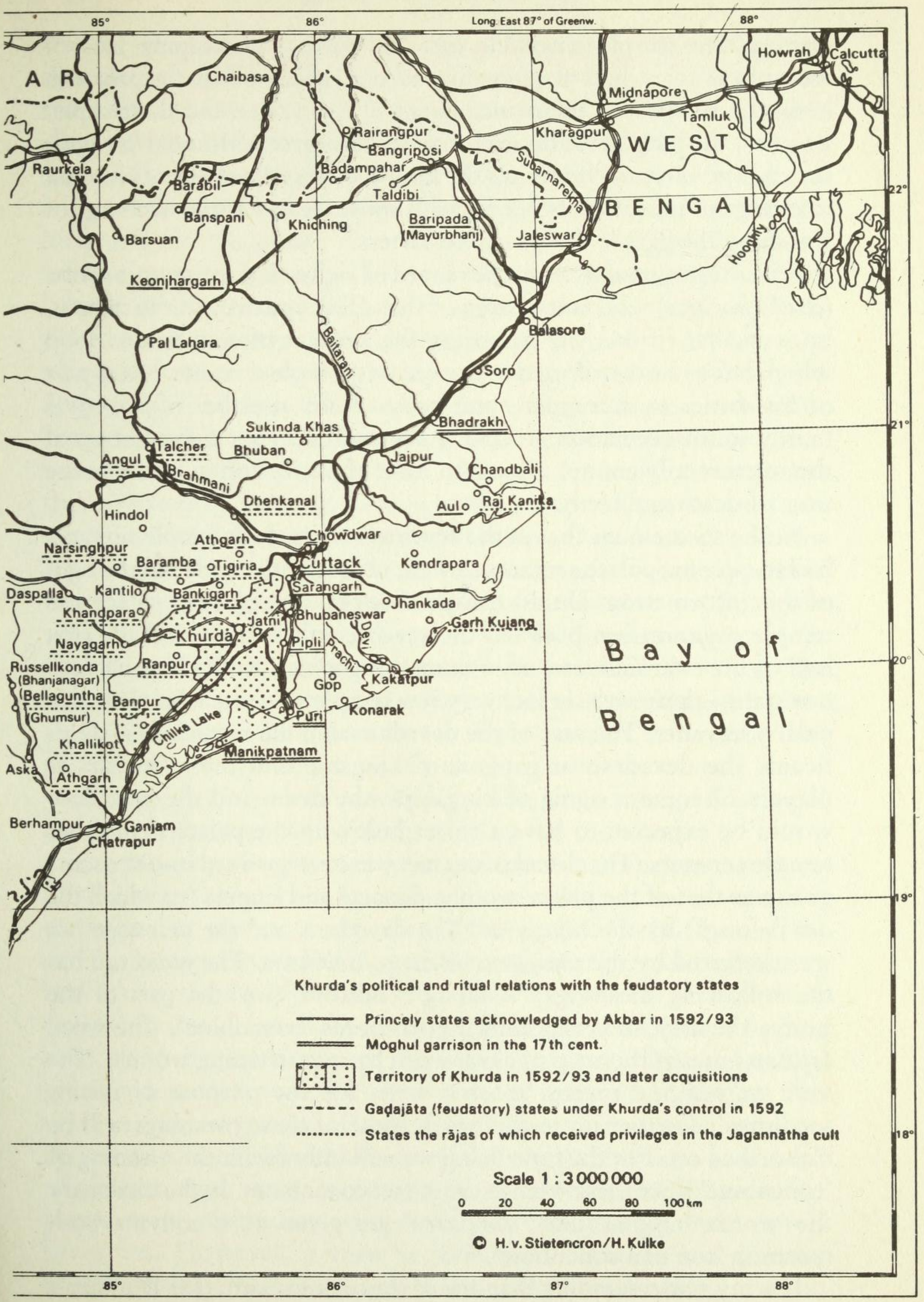
Besides these two groups there are a few individuals who have duties both in the temple and in the palace. One of these is a *pradhāni*; a brahmin whose main function is to call the brahmins who do the offering (*pūjā paṇḍā*) when it is time to carry out their duties. A *pradhāni* also stands by the *rājaguru* during the morning ritual of the devadasi in the temple. The record of rights mentions seven persons who are *pradhānis*. Only one of them also works in the palace.

Another brahmin group is that of the *khuntiās*—a *sebā* consisting of handing over garlands and camphor to the *pāśupālakas* and of calling them for their ritual. One person in that group also works in the palace; he is called the *Beherā Khuntiā* and his duty is to walk in front of the king at the time of the king's visit to the temple with a cane, announcing the king's visit.

Members of the caste of scribes (*karaṇa*) who are in charge of



Feudal Ties in Late Medieval Orissa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Badampahar
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Barabil
Taldibi
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B E N G A L
Banspani
Khiching
Baripada
(Mayurbhanj)
Jaleswar
Hooghly
Barsuan
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Balasore
Soro
Bhadrakh
Sukinda Khas
Talcher
Bhuban
Jajpur
Chandbali
Angul
Brahmani
Dhenkanal
Aulo
Raj Kanika
Hindol
Chowdwar
Athgarh
Narsinghpur
Baramba
Tigiria
Cuttack
Kendrapara
Daspalla
Kantilo
Bankigarh
Sarangarh
Jhankada
Khandpara
Jatni
Bhubaneswar
Garh Kujang
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Nayagarh
Pipli
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Ranpur
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(Ghumsur)
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Bay of
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Khurda's political and ritual relations with the feudatory states
Princely states acknowledged by Akbar in 1592/93
Moghul garrison in the 17th cent.
Territory of Khurda in 1592/93 and later acquisitions
Gaḍajāta (feudatory) states under Khurda's control in 1592
States the rājas of which received privileges in the Jagannātha cult
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writing the temple chronicle (*mādalā pāñji*), of keeping lists of worship articles, lists of expenditures, etc., also work in the palace to keep the records of the management of the palace and the temple. Besides, the king has at his exclusive service three additional *karaṇas*; the *chāmu karaṇa* who writes the king's letters; the *chāngaḍā karaṇa* in charge of the king's office and the *muda* (seal) *karaṇa* in charge of watching the gate to the queen's quarters.

It is interesting to read in the record of rights that the temple scribe (*deuḷa karaṇa*) who is in charge of the official records of the temple, in particular of the lists recording the amount of consecrated food which has to be distributed to the various temple servants, has as part of his duties to accompany the body of any member of the royal family to the cremation ground. As we will see later the members of the royal family are not subject to rules of purity and impurity at the time of death and birth.

Kulke's statement that in the seventeenth century temple servants had to become palace servants as well, must be questioned in the light of this information. Unless drastic changes took place in palace and temple organization between the seventeenth century and the first half of the twentieth century—something which Kulke himself does not state—there were in fact very few temple servants who were also palace servants. The case of the devadasis and the musicians is significant, the devadasis as insignia of kingship and the musicians as players of some insignia of kingship—the drum and the *kāhāliā*—would be expected to have a closer link with the palace than other temple servants. The devadasis in fact were categorized into the same group as that of the palace women dancers and singers (to which the *dei* belongs) by the *rājagurus*. The devadasis and the *deis* together were referred by the r*ājagurus* as the *taḷisebikā*-s. The word *taḷi* has the following meanings: 'seedling'; 'bottom' (i.e. the part of the body, the ass); in compound it also means 'concubine'. The word *taḷikanā* means the strip of cloth worn by menstruating women. The verb *taḷipakāibā* means 'to sow seeds for the purpose of raising seedlings'. Further on in this work some of these meanings will be elaborated on. For the time being we will only retain the meaning of 'concubine' since these women are in fact concubines. In the dictionary the words '*taḷipua*' and '*dāsīputra*' are given as synonyms both meaning 'son of a concubine'.[12]

It is my understanding that one of the major reasons for Dumont's argument regarding the secularization of the function of the king is

that the brahmin is superior to the king. A divine king would threaten, if not contradict, this hierarchical relationship between the king and the brahmin. It is therefore necessary to examine closely the relationship between the brahmins and the king in the context of Orissa if one wishes to understand the nature of the divine status of the king.

Let us first turn our attention towards the relationship between the king and the *rājagurus*. The *rājagurus* are not *sebākas*. The word *sebāka* means a person who does *sebā* and *sebā* means 'service', 'attendance', 'worship', and the *rājagurus* do not do that, nor do any of the high brahmins (*śāsan brāhmaṇa*) from among whom the *rājagurus* come. According to the two *rājagurus* of Puri, during the imperial period there used to be sixteen *rājagurus* appointed by the king who were the ministers and general of the armies (*bahini pati*; non-brahmin generals are called *senāpati*). Since the Khurdā rājās there were only four *rājagurus* and the present *rājagurus* are direct descendants of the lineage of these four *rājagurus* . I mentioned how Narasiṃha III in the middle of the seventeenth century appointed one of his *rājagurus* as the temple administrator and its 'great examiner'. One of the two *rājagurus* was the 'great examiner' of the temple and the other one is the family priest of the king. The *rājaguru*, as supervisor of the temple, was with the king its highest authority. Actual punishments for any deviation from prescribed ritual behavior was meted out by the king who was advised by the *rājaguru*. The only ritual in which the *rājaguru* participates is that of the devadasi during the morning offering.[13]

The *rājagurus* are the ones who perform the coronation ceremony of the king (*abhiṣeka*). After the king's wedding, every year this ceremony is repeated; it is then called *puṣyābhiṣeka*. Part of the ceremony consists of the king prostrating himself, circumambulating and taking the dust from the feet of the assembled *śāsan* brahmins, representatives from all the *śāsan* villages of Central Orissa. The king thus states his inferiority to the *śāsan* brahmins. This hierarchical relationship does not exist between the king and the brahmins who serve in temples (*pūjāri*). The king of Puri as we mentioned earlier, is the 'first servant' (*ādya sebāka*) and in that capacity stands at the head of all the temple servants including the brahmin ones. He can inflict punishment, including corporal punishments, on these lower brahmins. However, it must be remembered that the king is never worshipped by these lower brahmins and also that the king cannot do the offering for the deities. The ritual that the king can perform in the

temple is an offering of flower, camphor lamp, fanning, clothes, and the fly-whisk. He cannot participate in the main offering which takes place in the inner sanctum behind closed doors. Only brahmin priests can offer food to the deities. Such a fact is the contemporary form of the following statement found in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa (40.1), 'for indeed the gods do not eat the food of a king who has no *purohita*; therefore a king when about to offer a sacrifice should have a brāhmaṇa as his *purohita* with the idea "may the gods eat my food" ' (Kane, Vol. II, Part 1:40).

When the king visits the temple, he neither prostrates himself in front of the temple brahmins, nor does he salute them first. As he enters two brahmin temple servants stand on either side of him and he places his palms on theirs and thus he walks to the main temple. The temple brahmins do not directly give any of the 'left-overs' (*praśād*) of the deity to the king but give it to the *rājaguru* who gives it to the king. The king always goes to the temple accompanied by the *rājaguru*.

There are several parallels between the daily routine of the king and that of the deity in the temple and these must be examined to see both the similarities and the differences in the treatment of the king and the deities. The following is a description of the daily routine of the king based on a document written by Trinayana.

A special term (*pahuḍa*) is used only for the sleep of the deities and the king, and both the king and the deity are awakened in the same way by servants calling out loudly 'Your Majesty' (*maṇimā*) several times. After answering the calls of nature, the king washes and brushes his teeth. Then the astrologer reads the almanac concerning the auspicious and inauspicious times belonging to that particular day. Next the king receives an oil massage after which he goes to take his bath. While bathing, the *deis* sing songs in praise of the Ganges and of Lord Viṣṇu. Fresh silk clothes are brought by servants and the king puts them on. He then goes to the worship room where he worships his forefathers. This is followed by a worship of five deities: Nārāyaṇa (Viṣṇu), Ganeśa, Śiva, Durgā, and the sun. This worship is called *devārcana* (worship of gods).[14]

According to both *rājagurus*, the *devārcana* is a worship of the five above mentioned deities which should be done by the king while the *rājaguru* recites the *mantras*. However today—with the king mostly away—there is a 'short cut' (said in English) and the *rājaguru* himself does the *pūjā* of the five deities.

Before this worship begins the king sits on the throne holding the

royal staff. A silver lamp burning with ghee is kept close to him and the 'trumpet' (*kāhāliā*, not exactly a trumpet but a long silver wind instrument) is blown and the 'telengana' drums are sounded; the white and the black umbrellas are displayed along with the large fan and two palace servants hold the fly-whisks over the king's head. Another palace servant brings water and the king washes his hands (purifies them) after which the king bows down to the *rājaguru* and the latter blesses him. This blessing is followed by the *rājaguru* doing a *mangaḷāropana* to the king. This is another more elaborate form of blessing or more exactly of giving auspiciousness (*mangaḷa*) to the king. It consists of the *rājaguru* touching the king's forehead with the following objects which are placed on a tray: earth, lamp, fruit, grass, flowers, turmeric, mirror, curd, white mustard seeds, ghee, gold, raw rice, sandal paste, cloth, ornament, some berry leaves, and *sindur*. All the while the *rājaguru* is reciting Vedic invocations.

The *rājaguru* follows this by reading from a Purāṇa, after which the left-overs (*praśād*) from the temple arrive. These are flowers and *tulāsi*; while the king is standing the *rājaguru* touches these to the king's head and hands them over to him. The king washes his hands again. The *rājaguru* after having recited some *mantras* on raw rice, puts this on the king's head. The king proceeds to worship the five deities by offering flowers and coins. While this is going on the trumpet is blown. The king along with the *rājaguru* and the palace servants carrying the umbrella, fly-whisk, trumpet, drums and the *deis* go in a procession to the temple. As he enters the temple the *baherākhuntiā* goes ahead of him, striking the ground with a cane, while two other temple servants hold the palms of the king as he walks.

After circumambulating the main temple and visiting the other temples around the main shrine, the king enters through the northern gate into the main hall of the temple. The royal insignia—the umbrellas, fan, drums, and fly-whisk—remain outside. After touching his forehead to the Garuda pillar (Garuda is the bird carrier of Viṣṇu; touching the forehead at the door jamb and at the Garuda pillar is standard behaviour for all visitors), the king is led by one of the brahmin temple servants to the inner sanctum where he witnesses the bathing (*abakāsa*) of the deities. One tooth brush and some of the bathing water of the deities are sent to the palace. The king bows to the deities, touches their 'jewelled lion throne' (*ratna siṃhāsana*) with his forehead and circumambulates it. He also sips some of the bath water.

The king goes out through the southern door to the antechamber of the inner sanctum and goes to the platform where the assembly of learned brahmins sits: it is called the *mukti maṇḍapa*. There he salutes the brahmins by touching the ground with his forehead, and he receives their blessings.

Having done this, the king goes to a place near the southern gate of the main temple called *beharaṇa* where he sits and surrounded by the temple servants, scrutinizes the daily income, expenditures as well as the observance of the rituals. After which the king returns to the palace in the same manner as he had come.

From this account we can see the parallels between the way the deities and the king are treated and the glaring differences as well. The king has certain privileges that only the deities have, such as having at the gates of the palace two guardian lions so that this gate is called by the same name as the main (eastern) gate of the temple, namely *siṃhaduāra* (lion gate). The words used to refer to the king's sleep and to wake him up are the same as those used for the deities. The king's royal insignia: the umbrellas, the fan, the trumpet, the drums and the women who sing for him and also accompany him in procession are also used for the deities and they are in that context called royal insignia (*rājopacāra*). Thus the deity is treated as a king and the king is considered to be a deity, in a sense. The main difference is that the king is not worshipped by brahmins. The blessings he receives from the *rājaguru* and from the *śāsan* brahmins of the *mukti maṇḍapa* are on the contrary an expression of the king's subordination to these brahmins, for it is the prerogative of a superior to bless.

In particular it is important to stress that very few temple servants are also palace servants. Those who are both are precisely those temple servants whose rituals are called *rājopacāra*. Thus, to my mind, the closer involvement of the kings of Orissa with the temple after the fall of the empire, which culminated with the kings moving permanently to Puri after the British conquest in 1803, did not take a new form or express a radically new idea of the divinity of the king. The idea of divine kingship is very old and as we have seen, well antedates the fall of the empire. After 1568 and after 1803 the kings continued to be regarded as divine and continued to express their inferiority to the *śāsan* brahmins. The relationship between the kings and the brahmins did not change.

The greater involvement of the king in temple affairs and rituals must be seen simply as the result of the loss of their empire. Having

lost the autonomy that goes with empire, the kings could not wage wars in the fashion of the imperial kings. With their territory shrinking, more and more of their attention was turned to the temple, the source of legitimacy and of continuity with the past. The first imperial king of Orissa built a lavish dwelling for Jagannātha. The cult of Jagannātha during the imperial period became a source of power in its own right from which the later Khurdā Rājās were able to draw legitimization and sustenance.

The superiority of the *śāsan* brahmin and the divinity of the king may appear to Western eyes paradoxical. The paradox is resolved in part by the difference between the roles of the high brahmins and that of the temple brahmins. The latter are servants of the deities. They are not servants—or rather they do not serve or worship—the king because the king's divinity does not mean that he is the equal of Jagannātha. The king is also his servant, his *sebāka*, and he worships and prostrates himself in front of the deity. The king is a god among men, not among gods. Furthermore, this status does not allow him to feed the gods; this can only be done by brahmins. But it does, apart from that, place him above the temple brahmins, as *primus inter pares*, as the 'first servant'.

The high, learned, brahmins, do not serve. They perform the consecration ceremonies—*pratiṣṭhā*—and the coronation ceremonies of both the king and the gods (*abhiṣeka*); they also perform the vedic fire sacrifice (*homa, jagyā*). The knowledge of these rituals is theirs only.

By the *pratiṣṭhā* and the *abhiṣeka* ceremony the learned brahmins endow a person, an image, a building, with divine life or power. The word *pratiṣṭhā*, meaning 'ground, basis, support' (Gonda 1975:338) has come to refer to the consecration ritual in which it means 'to place definite power in an object, to endow an object with divine faculties etc.' (ibid.:371). For example, an image cannot be worshipped until it has received the *prāṇapratiṣṭhā mantra*, which establishes vital breath, life, in the image. At the time of the renewal of the images, these brahmins perform lengthy sacrifices as part of the *prāṇapratiṣṭhā* ceremony to endow the new images with life. Before the images are placed in the chariots at the time of the car festival, the same brahmins perform first a *pratiṣṭhā* ceremony with a fire sacrifice for the chariots. It is only after such ceremonies that the nature of the images, chariots, temples, etc. is changed and that they are 'no longer the mere material of which they are constructed, but become containers of life and supranormal power' (ibid.:371).

The *abhiṣeka* ceremony performed by the *rājagurus* when the heir of the deceased king first sits on the throne also infuses this man with supranormal powers and transforms him into a king. The same ceremony is performed yearly for Jagannātha; it is related to the *prathiṣṭhā* ceremony:

> . . . . *pratiṣṭhā* with regard to kingship means the 'establishment or accession to the throne.' This accession, too, is an endowment with power, the throne having a divine character and making the man who sits on it a king; elaborate rites and sacrifices are being performed at a prince's coronation. In this connection such phrases as 'being established in kingship *rājye pratiṣṭhitam*' may also be mentioned (ibid.:371).

Thus it can be said that it is these brahmins who endow the king with divine powers. The knowledge of the sacrifice and of the Vedas, the knowledge of the powerful word, endows these brahmins with a position above that of everyone else in the society. This eminence of knowledge is embodied in the assembly of learned brahmins: the *mukti maṇḍapa*.

The *mukti maṇḍapa* consists of sixteen brahmins from *śāsan* villages—that is the villages established for brahmins by the kings. The villages elect the most learned brahmin from among them to be sent as their representative to the *mukti maṇḍapa*. The platform on which these brahmins sit is said to be located exactly at the spot where the *pratiṣṭhā* ceremony of the temple was held, thus linking the foundation—or consecration—of the temple with the assembly which represents and embodies the foundation of society. This assembly is a sort of court which settles conflicts or doubts as to right behaviour whether it has to do with ritual matters or matters of caste such as intercaste marriages, intercaste dining and so on. Specifically the *mukti maṇḍapa* keeps the tradition of the *dharmaśāstras*. The *mukti maṇḍapa* does not mete out punishment (*daṇḍa*) but prescribes penances (*prāyaścitta*). However, the assembly can request the king, or the king can voluntarily suggest, that punishment be applied to see to it that the penances are carried out. The king alone can dispense punishment (*daṇḍa*). Punishments can be fines, corporal punishment, imprisonment, prohibition to enter the temple, or to carry out the ritual. Penances consist mostly of purificatory and expiatory actions such as gifts to brahmins, fasting, going on pilgrimages, and reciting the name of the Lord.

This information which I gathered in Puri from the *rājagurus* and

other persons echoes remarkably faithfully what Kane writes in his *History of the Dharmaśāstras*:

> The king has jurisdiction to punish sinners if they did not agree to undergo the *prāyaścitta* prescribed by the *pariṣad* [assembly of learned brahmins] but it is extremely doubtful whether he exercised that jurisdiction in all cases (Vol. IV:76).[15]

The *mukti maṇḍapa* is called *brahmāsana*, the seat of Brahma and when the brahmins sit on it as an assembly they collectively represent Brahma. Brahma has no image in the temple compound, or anywhere else. He is not worshipped as an anthropomorphic image; he is the source of the Vedas, the law of the universe and of all knowledge (Danielou 1964:236). Like his representatives, the assembly of learned brahmins, he is dissociated from worship.

The king in all matters takes the advise of his *rājagurus* and of the assembly of learned brahmins. In the words of one of the *rājagurus*: 'the administration (*śāsan*) was done by the king in consultation with the assembly of learned brahmins, the *rājagurus*, the head of monasteries (*mahanta*), *sannyāsis* and saintly persons (*santha*)'. There is however no separate sphere of jurisdiction between the assembly of learned brahmins who as specialists in the *dharmaśāstras* have an advisory function and the royal court. The king has the power to punish everyone, including the *śāsan* brahmins. When I asked the question whether a member of the *mukti maṇḍapa* could be punished by the king, Trinayana answered as follows: 'We should not take it for granted that the brahmins are free from *daṇḍa*. If they do some punishable deeds then the king punishes them. The highest punishment is banishment. The lightest punishment is to oust a brahmin from the *mukti maṇḍapa*.'

Such statements echo the words of Manu (IX.327): 'For when the Lord of creatures (Prajapati) created cattle, he made them over to the Vaisya; to the Brahmana and to the king he entrusted all created beings' (Bühler 1969:400).

The relationship between the king and the learned brahmins as it was described to me in Puri, seems in every way to correspond to that described in classical texts. There is a continuity between the imperial and the post-imperial conception of kingship. The learned brahmins are superior to the king and advise the king; the king embodies a divine power and wields *daṇḍa*. The relationship between these two powers is one of interdependence and close collaboration.

Let us now turn to a consideration of the status of the king in the *varṇa* hierarchy.

The Status of the King

Although the king shows his subordination to the learned brahmins by prostrating himself in front of them, he nevertheless has the power to punish them although he cannot inflict corporal punishment on these high brahmins. The king's position with respect to the temple brahmins is also seemingly ambiguous. He stands above them in his capacity as the 'first servant' of Lord Jagannātha and can inflict corporal punishment on them. He does not prostrate himself in front of them nor does he ever demonstrate his inferiority to them. However he cannot do the food offering for the deities and he is dependent on them, for without them the gods would not receive his offerings. The temple brahmins do not prostrate themselves in front of the king. When the latter visits the temple, they treat him like a deity by holding his palms, a gesture which is akin to that of holding the representative images on both sides when they are placed on palanquins for processions. But aside from this the temple brahmins do not worship the king. Thus the divinity of the king does not mean that he is treated like the gods are. He is a man-god (*manuṣya debatā*); an exalted king.

His position *vis-à-vis* the two classes of brahmins does not fit well into the hierarchical scheme of the theory of *varṇa* as expressed in the *dharmaśāstra* literature. The king in certain respects such as the power to punish, stands above everyone else in the society.

It is highly significant that the king—along with the queen and his immediate family—is exempt from rules of purity and pollution, except in the case of self-pollution. This fact is very ancient as the following quote from Gonda makes clear:

> Manu expressly states (5,93f, cf. also *Vaśiṣṭha-dharmaśāstra* 19, 48 and Viṣṇu-dharma-sūtra 22, 47ff) that kings, like those engaged in performing long sacrifices and religious observances are not liable to *āsauca-* because they first occupy the position of Indra, and the last are ever pure like brahmin. Purity and impurity, the same authority adds (Manu 5, 97) are caused and removed by the great gods, the lokapālas, by whose essence the king is pervaded (Gonda 1956:50–1).

This has often been explained on the pragmatic grounds that a king must never be incapacitated in his functions by rules of purity and

impurity, for it would be dangerous for the state. Such an argument does not seem very convincing to me. The king is surrounded by too many ministers, generals, and advisers who could for a limited period assume control. Also unlike the exemption for those engaged in long sacrifices and religious performances, the exemption of the king is permanent and starts from the time of his coronation. Thus it is not the person of the king which is exempt but his function as king.

I would propose that the king does not belong to the *varṇa* scheme, but only to the *āśrama* scheme. Both as a historical fact and in the writings on kingship in the *dharmaśāstras*, the king did and could come from all the *varṇas* as well as from among the tribals.

In the history of Orissa—as far as I am able to ascertain—there are three kings who acceded to the throne who were not the eldest son of the previous king and belonged to non-kṣhatriya status. Kapilendra, the founder of the Sūryavaṃśa dynasty (mid-fifteenth century) is said—in the Mādaḷā Pāñjī, the temple chronicle[16]—to have been first a cowherd, then a thief and finally had become a beggar in Puri. The last Ganga king having no son was directed in a dream by Jagannātha to adopt this man. G. N. Dash gathers whatever historical evidence is available and on the basis of that concludes that 'we tend to believe that the lengendary tradition recorded in *Rājābhoga* has been completely created in which Kapilendra's usurpation of the throne has been ignored and his early career has deliberately been painted black' (Dash 1978:210). My point is that whatever the historical truth may be, the fact that the compilers and readers of the temple chronicle thought this king could have been a cowherd, thief and beggar is what is relevant. A non-kṣhatriya, even a beggar, could become a king.

The next Sūryavaṃśa king, Puruṣottama, was according to legend (see Dash 1978:212–3) an illegitimate child of Kapilendra who besides him had eighteen legitimate sons. This legend was told to me by the two *rājagurus*, who called Puruṣottama a *dāsīputra*. Thus Puruṣottama is believed to have been the son of one of the *taḷisebikās*, the women temple and palace servants. Sons of such unions belong to their mother's group and not to the king. The *dei*, who had a son by the king, confirmed this. Such sons have no claims on the king and do not inherit anything. When I asked the *dei* whether the king takes responsibility for her sons by him she answered. 'No. When the son of a *dei* becomes able to earn then he leaves the palace, understanding the principle of his position. However, if the king loves one of them, out

of affection he can give something. But he doesn't love all of them. The sons cannot claim anything.'

Thus Puruṣottama was not a kshatriya but a bastard, the son of a concubine. Again the legend mentions a divine intervention through dream. Kapilendra in a dream was told by Jagannātha that whoever of his sons would first pick up his undone garment when he would go to the temple the next day, that son should become king. Sure enough the next day Kapilendra's garment came undone in the temple and Puruṣottama picked it up.

My last example is that of Rāmacandra, the first Khurdā king, whose origins are not well known. What is relevant in his case is that he was able to establish his claim to the Gajapati throne in spite of the more legitimate claim of a relative of the last Sūryavaṃśa king, the Calukya king from the south.

In Orissa, there are also many instances of tribal chiefs who became Hindu kings. This is what Kulke writes on this subject:

> Former tribal chiefs raised their status as new Hindu rājās by conducting grand royal Hindu rituals, through settlement of Brahmins (both near the capitals and outer areas), the construction of Hindu temples and the organization of the 'government' according to Hindu *śāstra* law books (1978:6).

Kane (in Vol. 3) provides a lengthy discussion on that topic. Although opinions are divided as to whether a king must be a kshatriya or can come from any of the four *varṇas*, many texts clearly state that a king can come from any *varṇa*. Kane also gives several historical or legendary evidence for kings being *śūdras* (see Kane, Vol. 3:38–9). A crucial line from the Vedas has been interpreted in various ways:

> The Vedic texts say '*rājā rājāsūyena yayeta*' (the *rājāsuya* [royal ritual] should be perfomed by a rājan) . . . The *pūrvapakṣa* (prima facie view) is that the word *rājan* applies to anyone (whether a brāhmaṇa, a kṣatriya or a vaiśya) who protects the people. The *siddhānta* (the established conclusion) is that in this text the word *rājan* means a kṣatriya . . . . Kumarila observes that persons of all the four varṇas are seen as rulers of kingdoms. In the literature on dharmaśāstra the word 'rājan' is understood in the sense of 'one who rules over or protects a country' (i.e. the pūrvapakṣa [prima facie view] view in the Pūrvamīmānsā). Vide Medhatithi on Manu VII.1. Apararka (on Yaj. I.366) remarks: 'when he who is not a kṣatriya performs the work of a kṣatriya (i.e. becomes a king) he should do all this (that a kṣatriya king has to do)' (Kane, Vol. 3:39).

There is one more significant characteristic of kingship which I want to discuss in this chapter. This is the king's power to change

people's caste. This power belongs only to the king, it doesn't even belong to the assembly of learned brahmins. Narasiṃha III (first part of the seventeenth century) created new hierarchical divisions within the *śāsan* brahmin caste, creating three new subcastes (Kulke 1978a:332). This power of the king was confirmed to me by a member of the royal family of the (erstwhile) independent kingdom of Mayurbhanj in the north of Orissa and by examples given by the two *rajagurus*.

Swarup Bhanj Deo, the younger brother of the king of Mayurbhanj, told me the following anecdote: while visiting his landed property in Mayurbhanj [he lives in Calcutta] he was working on a tractor, plowing. Having finished his task he climbed down and seeing someone approach wih a glass of water, he took it and drank it. It was hot and he was thirsty. Members of his entourage immediately exclaimed 'What have you done?' He querried and was told that he had just lost caste since he had accepted water from a member of the non-water-giving caste. He asked what he should do and was told that he had two choices open to him: (1) he could perform *prāyaścitta* (penances) or (2) he could change the man's caste. He chose to do the latter.

When I asked Trinayana about the king's ability to change people's caste he answered, 'The Rājā gave the sacred thread to many *śūdras* and made them brahmins.' As an example he recounted the following anecdote: a handsome barber was coming down the road and the king was there and thought that he must be a brahmin so the king saluted him (did *namaste*). The barber told the king that he was a barber (*bhandāri*). The king said 'Oh! What have I done? But that should not be a mistake; by my saluting you you are now a brahmin and people will now call you *bhadribrāhmaṇa*.' According to Trinayana the etymology of *bhadri* is that it comes from *bhandāri* (barber) and he said that in Ganjam district (to the south of Puri district) there is a caste called *bhadribrāhmaṇa*.

Another example he gave me was that of the cooks in the temple who are brahmins, called *śuāras*. Many of these *śuāras* have such names as Mahanti, Sāhu, Khuntiā, Subudhi, which are—according to Trinayana—*śūdra* surnames. The story about these *śuāras* is as follows:

> Once the king formed the desire to offer a sea of milk sweets surrounded by an embankment of cakes to the deities. This arrangement should be done in the inner sanctum and it should be offered to Lord Jagannātha. But who will

be able to cook so much food? At that time there were very few cooks. At that time also there were very few main dishes offered. So the question was who will prepare all this food? The *rājagurus* and the brahmins close to the king advised him in the following way: 'If you will permit it we can arrange for this to be cooked by other persons than brahmins; we can arrange that. By whoever it is cooked, it can be offered; do not think that non-brahmins cannot cook. The brahmins will do the offering and that is sufficient.' Many different castes belonging to the water-giving class cooked and the king gave them sacred threads and made them into brahmins. Even nowadays their customs are those of non-brahmins. For example they do not perform the anniversary *śrāddha* (offering to the ancestors) but only the yearly *śrāddha* during the fortnight of the ancestors. Another thing is that these *śuāras* consider the north-east (*iṣāna*) corner of their house to be their personal deity (*iṣta debatā*) and do not do *pūjā* to images of gods in their house. This is because the non-brahmins consider the north-east corner to be their personal deity since they had no right to have any images in their houses. Whatever we do to our house deities, they do to the north-east corner. There they also offer *piṇḍas* (balls of food offered to the ancestors at *śrāddha*). This can be seen even today in the houses of some of the *śuāras*. From that we can see that their traditions are *śūdra* traditions.

The other *rājaguru* told me the same story about the *śuāras* when I asked him about the king's ability to change people's caste. He also told me that in the feudatory states the tribals have become kings and kṣatriyas.

Thus on the basis of the four types of evidence reviewed in this section—(1) the king's relationship to the two classes of brahmins; (2) his immunity to impurity; (3) the fact that kings have come from all strata of the society; and (4) the king's ability to change people's caste—I deduce that the category of king does not fit in the *varṇa* scheme.[17] There is another type of evidence which further strengthens this hypothesis and that relates to the kind of power which the king has. The concept of auspiciousness (*mangaḷa*, *śubha*) is at the core of this kingly power. The devadasis, as has already been stated, are especially closely linked with the king and with kingship. They are also 'the auspicious women' (*mangaḷa nārī*). The relationship between auspiciousness and kingship will be further explored in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5

Palace Rituals

The devadasis participate in most palace ceremonies and festivals. They do so along with the *deis*. These women participate both in royal life-cycle ceremonies and in palace festivals. The *deis*, however, participate without the devadasis in some of the royal life-cycle ceremonies. Since the *deis*' presence, like that of the devadasis, is required at auspicious occasions, an inquiry into those occasions in which the *deis* participate will further our understanding of auspiciousness.

The *deis* as a group had a tradition very similar to that of the devadasis. In some respects, however, the *deis*' customs differed from those of the devadasis.

The *deis*, like the devadasis, after their dedication to palace service, did not marry mortal men: 'We marry *Bhagavān* (God)'. The dedication ceremony is also called 'tying the sari' and it takes place in front of the palace gate. The sari is a piece of cloth provided by the king. However, in their case it was not necessary that the tying of the sari be done pre-pubertally; the only criterion was that they should know how to dance and sing.

Their social organization—always according to the one *dei* I was able to interview—was the same as that of the devadasis. Their brothers and sons married and their daughters became *deis*. If there were not enough girls for the men to marry or girls to continue the tradition, they bought girls ('*āme kiniānuthilu*'; we bought and brought them over). They brought them from 'poor houses' of the water-giving castes. Their sisters-in-law were in strict purdah, or to use the *dei*'s own words: 'saw neither the sun nor the moon'. This she said in the context of talking about the queen, how she was always secluded. The *deis* could never see her for there was always a curtain separating them from the queen. Thus the wives of the men in the *deis*' group, like the wives of the men in the devadasis' group, were treated like the queen.

Like the devadasis, although they recruited girls from all water-giving castes, once they joined that group they were classified in the non-water-giving category.

The *deis*, unlike the devadasis, have an actual wedding ceremony performed. It takes place on an auspicious day after the girl's puberty. During her pubertal seclusion, the girl dreams of someone and it is to that person or god that she is married. The *dei* with whom I talked dreamt of Jagannātha on the fourth day of her seclusion. On the marriage day both the astrologer and the family priest (*purohita*) come as well as seven married women. The astrologer does calculations to get a fitting male name to be the girl's husband. In that *dei*'s case, the astrologer also got the name of Jagannātha. This coincided with what she had dreamt, that Jagannātha appeared in her dream and called her. On the wedding day a small chariot (*ratha*) and an image of Jagannātha was fashioned and she sat next to the image. The priest performed a wedding ceremony and she 'sat with a veil over my head'.

After the wedding the *dei* is taken to the king and she goes straight to his bedroom and if the king desires it she sings. For the *deis* it is a rule that they must first visit the king before they can have relations with anyone else. Like the devadasis, they live in their own houses in the town and have relations with men of the water-giving castes. However, from what this *dei* told me, she seemed to have lived in the palace for some time when she was young since she delivered her first child there.

Like the devadasis, the *deis* will never become widows and will always remain 'married women whose husbands are alive' (*ahya*). In the *dei*'s own words: 'Up to our old age we are *ahyarānī*-s, we have married a god. For that reason people take sand from our door; they take the bangles from our hands and give them to their daughters when they go to their husband's house or they give them to the newly arrived daughter-in-law. But today everybody thinks sinfully.' By this last remark she means that today people do not do that anymore and think of them not as bringers of auspiciousness but as prostitutes.

The *deis* also went to the houses of *paṇḍās* and important people to sing the auspicious song at the time of marriage. But they do not go together with the devadasis. They go to different houses.

The devadasis and the *deis*, although they say they will not take water from each other, maintain a close relationship. They went to see each other's ceremonies. In particular, when someone dies among

the *deis* the men of the devadasis' group will carry the body to the cremation ground and reciprocally, the men of the *deis*' group will do the same for the devadasi group. But neither group is polluted by a death or birth in the other group.

The Auspicious Life-cycle Ceremonies

The *deis* were called to the palace on the occasion of auspicious life-cycle ceremonies surrounding pregnancy and childhood. When the queen is seven months pregnant there is a small celebration called 'eating cakes' (*ciṭāu khiā*) in which the queen is fed cakes. This is also observed among the brahmin temple servants and I was told that everyone does it. The *deis* never enter into the bedchamber of the queen but stand outside and sing auspicious songs. These songs are different from those the devadasis sing. The *dei* told me her children had torn all the papers on which she had written her songs and that she does not remember them. But what she said about the auspicious song is the following: 'We sing the auspicious song and we do *hulā-huli* and so we call all the gods and they come.'

On the day of delivery at the time of the queen's labour the *deis* are called. This is how the *dei* put it:

> She is a deity and we are her *apsarī*. That's why we are called. They say: 'call the *apsarī*, they will pray (*stuti karibe*).' If labour is difficult and lasts a long time, we stay. We inform the gods and by that this living being will be delivered. For other people, the doctor is called in such cases, or a nurse. But when the queen has a difficult labour they call us.

The *deis* stand outside by the door and sing auspicious songs. In the passage just quoted, the *dei* says that they are *apsarases*. These are the heavenly courtesans who adorn the court of Indra, the king of the gods. Some of the devadasis also likened themselves to these *apsarases* who are also called 'heavenly courtesans' (*swargabeśyā*). When I asked whether this work was an 'auspicious work' (*śubha kārjya*) she said: 'Yes, this is an auspicious work.' I will return later to the analogy between the *deis*, the devadasis, and the heavenly courtesans.

On the fifth day after birth, there is another auspicious ceremony called 'the fifth' (*pancuāti*). On that day five kinds of grams are parched and distributed to the *deis*.

On the sixth day after birth, there is a ceremony in which the goddess Ṣaṣṭhī (meaning the sixth) is worshipped. Ṣaṣṭhī is a form of

Durgā and she protects infants. On that day designs are drawn in the house and the name of the baby is chosen. On the twelfth day the *deis* are also called and again on the twenty-first day (*ekoisiā*). Brundabati celebrated this ritual on the occasion of the twenty-first day after the birth of her first grandson, and I was able to witness the ceremony. The baby was first massaged with oil and turmeric. Then Brundabati did a worship of seven married women. These women lived in the same lane. They stood in a row outside Brundabati's house; Brundabati came to each of them in turn and washed their feet, put *sindur* on their forehead and gave them some food.

The *deis* are also called one month after the birth, for a brief celebration called 'one month' (*māsikiā*).

The first birthday of a child is celebrated with a big feast, called 'one year' (*barsikiā*). I was invited at such a feast in the house of a *paṇḍā*. While the family priest was performing a *pūjā* in the front room of the house, the young men of the household were bringing in enormous vessels filled with food. About a hundred people were fed, relatives by blood and by marriage as well as neighbours. The child received gifts of money, jewelry and clothes from the guests. In particular he received a gold ring from his mother's brother. As the guests arrived they would touch the money and jewelry to the child's forehead and then hand it to the mother.

The next ceremony is the 'ear-piercing' ceremony for boys (*karṇa bedha*) which should be, but is not always, held, on the fourth year of the boy's life. After this there is what is called 'touching the chalk' (*khāḍi chuā*) at which a child is made to touch the chalk which he will use for learning. It marks the beginning of learning for the child. The next ceremony is that of the sacred thread (Skt. *upanayana*, Oriya *brata*) at which a boy receives a sacred thread and becomes twice-born (Śūdras do not have this ceremony). The auspicious songs are sung towards the end of the ceremony, after the oblations to the fire (*homa*) have been done.[1]

We come now to one of the most important life-cycle rituals, that of marriage. Unlike the rites surrounding pregnancy and childhood, the devadasis participate in this ceremony. The present king of Puri married on 4 December 1978, so on the occasion of my third visit to Puri in late December 1978 and January 1979 I was able to get fairly detailed descriptions of the ceremony still fresh in everyone's mind. Two of the devadasis went to the wedding, Radha and Bisaka, but the *dei* apparently was not invited. The two *rājagurus* were the officiating

priests. The wedding took place in Puri since the Gajapatis do not go to the bride's house for their marriage but the bride comes to Puri. The king married a woman from a Rajput lineage settled in Rajasthan but originally from Kashmir.[2]

The descriptions I have are from the two devadasis who did go to the wedding and from the two *rājagurus* who officiated. Amrapalli and Brundabati were also invited. Amrapalli was willing to accept if Brundabati did, but the latter declined. When I asked her why she had refused the invitation, she said to me: 'When I have Jagannātha, I have everything. I do not need anyone else.' She would not elaborate anymore. I assume that her attitude in this case must be understood as part of the adjustments to the contemporary situation in which the devadasis' relationship to the king is downplayed. Radha and Bisaka did not understand such an attitude; the two of them are still very much functioning in the traditional manner, taking the king as the ultimate authority. Bisaka told me: 'This one is unmovable Viṣṇu (i.e. Jagannātha) and that one is movable Viṣṇu (i.e. the king), so why shouldn't we go?' She was worried about talking to me about it, though, and expressed her reservation in the following way: 'If this goes to the ear of the king then perhaps he will be angry.' But Radha easily assuaged her fear.

According to Trinayana, the wedding of the king does not essentially differ from that in the *rājagurus* family except for some small differences, one being that the wedding of the king, like that of non-brahmins, takes place at night whereas for the brahmins it takes place during the day. The other difference, as I have mentioned, is that the bride comes to Puri whereas in other cases the groom and his party go to the bride's locality for the wedding ceremony. In the case of the king's wedding the 'house of the bride' was the governor's mansion, one of the largest and handsomest buildings in Puri.

Preparations started fifteen days before the wedding by decorating the palace with arches both inside and outside. On that day also two brahmin girls came to the palace and started powdering the turmeric that would be used to massage the bride and groom on several occasions during the ceremony. Servants of the king did 'the invitation of Jagannātha Mahāprabhu' and the invitation of all the gods in the palace. An invitation was sent to the king's mother's brother and after that to all other relatives and friends. The same invitations were made on the bride's side.

The bride's father's younger brother (*kākā*) came bearing gifts for

the king: clothes, sandal-wood paste, a golden ring, rice yellowed with turmeric and *sindura*. From the king's side, his father's younger brother went to the bride's side with gifts of clothes and ornaments.

On the seventh day before the wedding, the cooking of cakes started. On the second day before the wedding, the beginning of grinding black gram (*biḍi jāi anukuḷa*) took place.

The day before the wedding, the wives of the *rājagurus* went with new cooking pots containing new cloths, red feet dye, *sindura*, turmeric, and raw white rice, to a goddess temple where a *pūjā* to the seven mothers (*sapta mātruka*) was performed. They asked the goddesses for 'auspiciousness'. The rite is called 'auspicious cooking pots' (*hāṇḍi mangulā*). On that day there was a feast in the palace for the relatives of the king called the 'auspicious work feast' (*mangaḷa krutiyā bhoji*).

The day of the wedding is counted as day one, the actual rites taking place that night. But the marriage rites are not over until the seventh day after the wedding day. In those seven days two days are of crucial importance: the wedding day at the bride's place and the fourth day at the groom's place. Thus the greater part of this account focuses on the wedding day and on the rites on the fourth (*cāturtih*).

On the day of the wedding, before sunrise, the bride and groom, each in their own places, took a bath and were massaged with turmeric.

A group of persons from the bride's side came to the palace to invite the groom. The barber and his wife arrived at that time; they played central roles during the wedding. The bride's party returned from the king's place and when it arrived at the bride's place, the bride was made to sit in a room on a heap of salt and mustard seeds.

Before the groom's procession was ready to go, the king's mother fed him molasses and curd (*dahighura*). The king's mother is a widow and there was some disagreement as to whether she could do this or not. One of the feudatory queens said that a widowed queen cannot do that but one of the *rājagurus* objected saying: 'It is her duty, she certainly can do it.' As I mentioned earlier the widow of the king does not wear the signs of widowhood. It would appear that in this instance she was allowed to behave as if she were not widowed. However, later on in the wedding she did not perform certain actions because of her widowhood.

After this feeding by the mother, the procession started (*jātrā anukuḷa*). As the groom's procession approached the bride's place,

the father of the bride came to meet it. This is called 'the road invitation' (*bāṭa baraṇa*). The king travelled seated in a contraption called a *tāmjān* carried by men. The father of the bride washed the feet of the groom as the latter entered the bride's place. The married women, the wives of the *rājagurus* and the devadasis did *hulā-huli* and *bandāpanā*.

This was followed by a reception for the groom and his party. When the auspicious moment arrived in the evening, the groom went to the wedding platform which had been erected in the yard behind the house. The bride came and standing a bit away from the platform threw a fistful of salt and mustard seeds towards the groom,[3] after which she went back inside the house.

The father of the bride and the king's father's younger brother came at that point and sat on the platform.[4]

The father of the bride worshipped Varuna and the Seven Mothers; the groom repeated the same worship. Having done this, the father of the bride proceeded to 'the first welcoming' (*pratama baraṇa*) of the groom by addressing him as a deity, uttering the following words: 'I take (you) to be the form of Nārāyaṇa (Viṣṇu)' (*Nārāyaṇa swarupā upakalpayāmi*).

The father of the bride followed this by a second welcoming in which he offered the groom six types of purificatory water (*sadārghya*). (The word *ārghya* is only used in the worship of deities.) The bride who, by that time, was all decorated, her face covered by her sari, was brought to the platform by the wife of the barber. The bride held in her folded hands raw white rice (*cāuḷa ānjuli*) with a betel nut on top of it.

By now all the participants were on the wedding platform or around it. The bride sat on the left of the groom. Behind her was the barber's wife (*bārikiānī*) and next to her, her father. The groom and his *karttā* were flanked by the two *rājagurus* with the barber behind them.[5] Standing outside the platform behind the groom were the following persons: the trumpet blower (*kāhāliā*), the two devadasis on either side of him and behind them the temple-palace musicians (*bajantāris*). Behind the bride, outside the platform, seated on chairs were her relatives and friends.

When the bride arrived, her father held her in his lap and uttered the declaration of intent (*saṃkalpa*) to do the gift of a maiden (*kanyā dāna*): 'My daughter . . ., daughter of . . ., granddaughter of . . . (and so forth for three generations). I give her to . . ., son of . . . (and so

forth for three generations).' It is after that that the bride's father uttered what is called the 'great phrase' (*mahābākhya*) 'I have done the gift of a daughter for the sake of a son' (*putrārte mũu kanyā dāna kali*). Part of the *mantras* recited then included the 'changing of the *gotra*' (*gotra paribārtana*). The bride's father named his clan and the groom's clan and said that his daughter goes from his clan to the groom's clan.

After having done this the father of the bride gave gifts of gold and sesame to the brahmin priests as their *dakṣina* (their 'honorarium'). The father of the bride will not obtain the merit (*puṇya*) from having done the gift of the maiden until the *dakṣina* is given (see Inden 1977:54).

The king's father's younger brother also recited a phrase called the 'true recitation' (*satyapātha*): 'We are doing the marriage of your daughter with our nephew.' After which he also gave gifts to the priests.

It is at this point that the tying of the hands (*hasta gaṇṭhi*) of the bride and groom with *kuśa* grass and flower garlands took place as well as the tying together of the clothes of the bride and groom. At that moment the devadasis sang the auspicious song: a song about Rāma's wedding (see Chapter 3, n. 9 for the text of that song).

The bride then went and sat on the right of the groom. The groom lifted her veil and looked at her. He placed *sindura* in the parting of her hair and on her forehead.

The hands of the bride and groom were untied by a married woman (*ahya*). (In another version this was done by an unmarried maiden (*kumārī*). In the auspicious song about Rāma's wedding, a maiden is mentioned as the one who unties the hands.) At this point the devadasis left and returned home.

The Vedic fire sacrifice began at that moment. The fire was lighted by the *rājagurus*. The king poured oblations into the fire and both the groom and the bride threw parched paddy (*lāja*) and a kind of leaf (*samipatra*) in it, while the priests recited Vedic *mantras*.

The bride and groom then sat on a grinding stone of the kind that is found in every kitchen and used for grinding spices and other foods.[6] The pole star, called *dhruba tārā*, meaning the 'fixed', 'steady' star, was shown to the couple.[7] Then, helped by the barber and his wife, the couple circumambulated the fire. This ended the rites on the wedding platform. Married women and the wives of the *rājagurus*, did *bandāpanā* to the couple and led them inside a room where the couple was supposed to play a cowrie shell game.

By this time it was early in the morning of the next day. Later that morning, at an auspicious moment the bride and groom went to the palace. Since no one must see the queen, an awning of cloth was built in front of the main gate so that the queen could go directly from the car to the palace, without being seen by the public. Waiting for the couple at the entrance of the palace were the married women, both relatives of the king and of the feudatory kings as well as the wives of the *rājagurus*. The devadasis stood by the two 'full pots' (*purṇa kumbha*) on either side of the entrance. As the couple came out of the car the women did *hulā-huli* and accompanied it inside to the palace courtyard. There the wife of the king's father's brother—not his mother, in this case her widowhood was activated—did *bandāpanā* to the couple. When not walking, the devadasis sang the Rāma wedding song; while walking, they did *hulā-huli*.

Then the bride and groom went to the worship room, called the *Iśāna* house (*Iśāna ghara*; *iśāna* is the north-east direction where the house deities are placed) for a 'viewing' (*darśan*) and to offer a handful of flowers. After this they went to see the king's mother who gave them a pot full of curds into which she had dropped a ring; both the bride and the groom searched for it. The bride got it and slipped it on the groom's finger.

The married women performed *bandāpanā* twice a day—once in the morning before the first meal and once in the evening—for the next seven days. The devadasis did not perform *bandāpanā* but they were present, singing the auspicious song. They thus came to the palace twice a day for the next seven days.

The next important series of rituals took place on the fourth day of the ceremony; that is two days after the bride and groom had returned to the palace. On the morning of the fourth day the bride and groom separately took a bath using turmeric and performed the usual purificatory rituals. The bride and groom then jointly performed an offering to the king's ancestors (*śrāddha*). On that day the bride for the first time entered the kitchen and cooked. She prepared the food for the offering to the ancestors. This consisted of grinding raw rice into a powder, adding water to it, and forming globules called *piṇḍa*-s. She also cooked over the fire a sweet rice preparation (*khiri*).[8]

Thus the first cooking of the bride in her capacity of wife is the food for her newly acquired ancestors. Her first action as a wife is to feed the lineage. The groom with his bride by his side offered the food to his ancestors. He offered it to three generations of forefathers and their wives, and then to the three *puruṣa* (man, generation) of his

mother's father (*ajā*), that is to three generations of his mother's natal *kuḷa* (which is a line of her fathers and their wives) and lastly to three generations of his maternal grandmother's (*āi*) natal *kuḷa*. Thus offerings were given to the groom's own line and to the natal line of his mother and his mother's mother.

At the conclusion of this ancestor worship the groom changed his bride's name. The new queen was given the name of the wife of the fourth generation of forefathers of the king. The king, when he was enthroned, was also given a new name, that of his fourth generation ancestor. It is as if, after three generations, the three generations which are worshipped, the cycle began anew.

After the ancestor worship the bride and groom were given a massage with turmeric and oil by the married women followed by a *bandāpanā*.

In the evening, the bride and groom all dressed up and wearing crowns made of wooden sticks (*kāṭi mukuta*) sat on a raised platform. The king's mother, along with the married women, came there and performed a *bandāpanā* to the couple while the devadasis sang. The couple then played a game of shells (*cowrie*), and the king's mother fed her son curds and rice. She placed in their folded hands raw rice (*cāuḷa ānjuli*); the couple went to the worship room and deposited the rice there.

The couple proceeded to the bedchamber which had been decorated; it is then called the 'honey-bed room' (*madhusajyā gruha*). In this room an oblation to the fire took place for the purpose of getting a son. The *rājagurus* poured ghee into the fire and their wives handed whatever had to be handed to the queen who sat behind a curtain. The devadasis stood at the door jamb next to the two full pots which had been placed on either side of the door.

The groom, his right arm held by the bride, poured oblation of parched rice into the fire. A one-year-old brahmin boy was brought in and made to sit in the bride's lap. She fed him sweets; this is called the worship of the child Krishna (*Santāna gopāl*), performed so that the couple may have a child like Krishna.

After this the couple was 'bathed' in rice (*nagara snāna*) and then sprinkled with water from a jar (*abhiṣeka*). The last oblation, called the 'full or complete oblation' (*purṇahuti*), was done marking the end of this fire sacrifice. The couple gave the *rājagurus* their honorarium. Before retiring for the wedding night[9] in the 'honey-bed room' the couple went for a 'viewing' of the palace deities. This completed the wedding rituals. However for three more days the devadasis and the

wives of the *rājagurus* came twice a day to the palace to do *bandāpanā* and sing the auspicious song. On the eighth day the bride and groom were kept apart since they are not supposed to see each other on that day. On the ninth day the king and queen returned to Delhi.

The ritual just described differs in only a few details from the marriage ceremony of both brahmins and non-brahmin commoners. In commoners' weddings, the bride and the groom are treated as royalty. The groom is dressed like a king (*rājā beśa*); he arrives at the bride's house preferably mounted on a horse, a royal animal. The bride's father during the ceremony worships the groom and addresses him as a form of Viṣṇu. The treatment of the bride and the groom as king and queen has been commented upon by several authors. Hocart quotes Mrs Stevenson on the subject:

> . . . they [the bride and groom] are looked on as king and queen till the end of the festivities, and as such the groom wields a sword. No permission from the state is needed for the bridegroom to hold his sword, so agreed is everyone that for the time being he is a king (Stevenson 1920:68ff in Hocart 1927:100).

Srinivas writes that in Coorg the groom has a dagger, a sword, and a white umbrella, one of the insignia of kingship, held over him (Srinivas 1952:85–6). Dumont and Pocock observe that at weddings the bride and groom are worshipped: 'Sometimes the bridegroom is compared to the king, sometimes the bridal pair is identified with a divine couple' (Dumont and Pocock 1959:33). Since the king is considered to be a deity, it is hard to maintain a clear distinction between worshipping a king and worshipping a god. Inden and Nicholas have made a similar point:

> The major overall purpose of the *saṃskāras* is to transform the recipient into a person of kingly preeminence on earth and divine preeminence in the next world. This is in part effected by dressing the recipient in new special clothing and ornaments so as to resemble deities and royalty (1977:41–2).

The royal nature of weddings will be explored further on in this chapter in the context of a discussion of the coronation ceremony.

The last ceremony to be discussed is that of ancestor worship (*śrāddha*). My informants were divided as to whether this constitutes an auspicious or an inauspicious ceremony. Some said it was auspicious and others said it was inauspicious. One person—the maternal uncle of P. C. Mishra—had an interesting reply to the question whether *śrāddha* is an auspicious or inauspicious ceremony. He said, 'it is an inauspicious ceremony performed in order to gain auspiciousness.'

However, during this ceremony, the sacred thread of a brahmin worshipper is reversed and worn on the right shoulder hanging over the left waist. This is called *apasabya* and it is also done at the funeral ceremony. Some informants told me that this was done at all inauspicious ceremonies. In particular the *paṇḍā* in charge of pilgrims at Indradyumna tank, who performs ancestor worship for the pilgrims, when I asked him whether *śrāddha* was an inauspicious ceremony or not, told me that '*śrāddha* is an *apasabya* ceremony'. When I asked Radha the same question she just told me that it was an auspicious ceremony. Then I asked her whether she went to brahmin temple servants' houses to sing the auspicious song on the occasion of this ceremony. To this she replied that: '*Śrāddha* does not fall within the auspicious works. Previously I didn't understand, but now thinking about it I realize that it is inauspicious (*amangaḷa*).' But then the devadasis do not go to all the auspicious ceremonies in the houses of the brahmin temple servants.

The *dei* gave me a categorical answer. She said that *śrāddha* is an auspicious work and that their presence was required during the performance of ancestor worship in the palace. The *śrāddha* ceremony to which they were invited is the one called *maulā śrāddha* which takes place during the fortnight of the ancestors in the dark half of the month of *āświna* (Sept.–Oct.). Their presence was not required during the offering which is made on the death anniversary of an ancestor. At the yearly *śrāddha* they stand at the door, behind a curtain, and sing the auspicious song.

The yearly ancestor worship has features which are otherwise found only at the funeral ceremony such as the reversal of the sacred thread. Reversals seem to be a feature of the funeral ceremony; the mourners circumambulate the pyre in anti-clockwise manner which is the opposite of normal circumambulation where the right shoulder is kept towards the deity or object circumambulated. At funerals it is the left shoulder which is kept turned towards the pyre (on this point see also Srinivas 1952:73 and Kaushik 1976).

During the yearly *śrāddha*, the offering of the balls of food for the ancestors—the *piṇḍas*—is done in the right hand but by placing the food down rotating the hand upwards and towards the right. The *paṇḍā* at Indradyumna tank told me that this is the opposite (*ultā*) of the way one serves food to living beings and the way one must serve food to the ancestors. Doing it the normal way would result in the ancestors not receiving the offering.

Veena Das in her path-breaking work on an ancient text on the domestic rituals (the *gṛhya sūtras* of Gobhila) shows that in rites to ancestors the left predominates (1977a:13).

It is clear that there are features in ancestor worship which are similar to or the same as those found in the inauspicious funeral ceremony. On the other hand—as we have just seen—the first ancestor worship performed by a man and his wife is on the occasion of their wedding, the auspicious ceremony *par excellence*, and furthermore as a part and a prelude to fertility rites. Radha said of the worship of the ancestors on the fourth day that: 'By that the blessings of the groom's ancestors are sought for the conception of a son.'[10]

The ancestors are clearly linked with death. But they are also linked with the continuity of the line and thus with procreation. It is possible that this double and opposed linkage is what makes some persons consider ancestor worship auspicious and some others inauspicious.

The inauspicious ceremony to which no *dei* or devadasi will ever go is the funeral ceremony. Everyone I have talked to said that the funeral is an inauspicious rite. Other inauspicious rites are those performed on the occasion of an illness. In the chapter on the car festival I will explore further the relationship between illness and inauspiciousness.

In the classification of life-cycle ceremonies into auspicious and inauspicious we can notice two things: (1) auspicious ceremonies are those which cluster around the life producing events and inauspicious ceremonies are those connected with death or misfortune. (2) Some of the auspicious ceremonies such as birth and puberty involve observances of pollution rules; the inauspicious funeral ceremony also renders the participants impure. On the other hand ancestor worship is sometimes classified as inauspicious but it never creates pollution. Thus one cannot equate auspiciousness and inauspiciousness with purity and impurity.

Such a classification of life-cycle ceremonies corresponds closely to the findings of Veena Das in her analysis of the text of Gobhila on domestic rituals. She associates the left side with death ceremonies, ancestor worship, rites to ghosts and demons, and rites to snakes; and the right side with the passage of time, rites of initiation, rites of pregnancy and rites of marriage. She points out that this categorization does not correspond to the pure-impure opposition (1977b:99, 119). However, Das does not make her analysis in terms of the auspicious/

inauspicious categories but in terms of spatial categories such as the left and the right and the categorization of the cardinal points. Nevertheless, both my interpretation and hers seem to converge in that the two classes of life-cycle rituals correspond to a life and death opposition. I suspect, though, that the right-left division is only expressive of a more fundamental principle, that of reversal. For example in the way the *piṇḍa*-s are offered to the ancestors at Indradyumna tank (and according to the *paṇḍā* everywhere else as well), the gesture the hand makes is from the left to the right, turned upwards. Das writes that in her right category 'the movement of objects or persons is always from left to right' (1977b:96–7). She categorizes the ancestor worship ceremony in the left category. The gesture I just described was explained by the priest to be the 'opposite' (*ultā*) of what is normally done when serving food; the hand is then turned from right to left, the palm downwards. The spatial symbolism for ancestors and death is the reverse of that for the living and for the gods, as the example of the way food for the ancestors is given indicates, since it is done not according to Das' spatial categorization—according to which the gesture should be made from right to left and not the other way around—but according to the principle of reversal.

The Royal Festivals

The *deis* and the devadasis' presence is also required on the occasion of three royal festivals. These are the coronation (*gādināsina abhiṣeka*) and its yearly renewal (the *puṣyābhiṣeka*) in the month of *pauṣa* (Dec.–Jan.); the ceremony marking the beginning of the Gajapati's new regnal year, called *suniā*, on the twelfth day of the bright fortnight of the month of *Bhādraba* (Aug.–Sept.); and finally Durgā *pūjā* which is celebrated in the palace for sixteen days. The day after the end of Durgā Pūjā is called *dasaharā* and is also a royal festival.

The Coronation

When the old king dies, the news is broken to his eldest son in a set formula by a palace servant who says: 'a stranger (*bideśi*) lies dead in the palace.' The eldest son orders the corpse to be removed by the back door. None of the dead man's blood relatives are affected by death pollution. The funeral rites are conducted by a brahmin who is appointed by the eldest son and who is called 'the son brahmin' (*pua brāhmaṇa*). This brahmin was usually selected from a lower class of

brahmin, not a temple servant brahmin. He was considered very low since he would perform the funeral of a non-brahmin, for which he was given land, gold, and money. Recently, the *rājagurus* told me, because of the wealth to be acquired by performing this ritual, high brahmins compete to get the job. Generally this brahmin came from outside of Puri.

None of the dead king's relatives go to the cremation ground. The appointed brahmin goes and also, as mentioned in the previou chapter, one of the temple-palace scribes (*karaṇa*). In the words o the *dei*: 'The inauspicious works of the king are done by the son brahmin.'

The widow of the king marks his death by taking off her glass bangles, helped by the wife of the barber, but she continues to wear gold bangles and some other jewelry. My informants did not remember exactly what the widow queen does since the only widowed queen they know is the widow of the present king's father who is not a very traditional woman. However all agreed that the widow, like all other blood relatives, did not observe death pollution and did not shave her hair. Some informants said that she does not use the signs of a married woman such as *sindur* etc . . . while others said that the widowed queen does not wear any of the signs of widowhood. We have already seen that in the case of the king's wedding sometimes his widowed mother was able to act as if she were not widowed but at other times she was not.

However, before the dead king is taken to the cremation ground, his eldest son is bathed and a coronation ceremony performed which is called 'the temporary coronation' (*asthāyiabhiṣeka*) at which all the relatives present in the palace join, as well as the palace servants and the devadasis who sing auspicious songs. The ceremony is performed by the *rājaguru*. It is only after this ceremony is performed that the news of the old king's death is broadcast and his body taken to the cremation ground.

The coronation ceremony is repeated on the thirteenth day after the death of the old king when the period of inauspiciousness (*aśubha*) is over which means that all the funeral ceremonies are finished on the twelfth day and the inauspicious funeral works are over. Although no one in the palace observes death pollution, that period of time is inauspicious. By that time invitations have been sent out to the feudatory kings who come to Puri for the second coronation.

Before the second coronation, on the thirteenth day, the king goes

to the temple. There a sari from Jagannātha is tied on the king's head by the *rājaguru*. This gesture signifies that the new king has become the 'servant' of Lord Jagannātha.

Upon his return to the palace the ceremony of 'enthronement' (*gādināsina abhiṣeka*) is performed.[12] Nowadays it can be performed whether or not the new king is married, but previously it could only be performed for a married king.

S. N. Rajaguru mentioned to me in this respect an inscription from Kenduli of Nrusingha Dev in which it is said that upon the death of Coḍaganga's father his son was only four years old. His mother sought the help of her brother the Cōḷa king of Kāñcī in the south, since at that time her husband's Kalinga kingdom (that was before the conquest of Central Orissa by Coḍaganga in AD 1112) was surrounded by enemies. So her brother immediately arranged for the wedding of his sister's son with his own daughter who was even younger than Coḍaganga. By performing this wedding Coḍaganga was able to be crowned king.[13]

Hocart also has gathered evidence, in his book on kingship, that 'in ancient India a king could not be consecrated without a queen . . . without a consort he is not complete' (1927:101–2). The *rājagurus* of Puri also told me that for a 'full' or 'complete' coronation (*sampurṇa abhiṣeka*) the king has to be married. I will come back later to this point.

In his study of medieval royal rituals, Ronald Inden makes the same point:

> The *abhiṣeka* was meant to follow marriage in the sequence of *saṃskāras*, that is, a man was to become a king after becoming a householder, and his wife was to participate with him in the ceremony, becoming his principal or senior queen (*agra-mahiṣī*) (1977:38).

The second coronation is a shorter ceremony than the 'full' coronation which can only be celebrated after the king's wedding. That full coronation is then celebrated every year in the month of *pauṣa* (Dec.–Jan.). In Puri this ceremony had not yet been performed for the new king who had just got married. He did not return to Puri on the date of the *puṣyābhiṣeka* which fell in early January.

The following is a description of the *abhiṣeka* ceremony based on reports from the *rājagurus*.

The ceremony begins with the preparation of a vessel (*kaḷaśa*) called 'the increaser' (*barddhanī*). In this vessel water is poured from

the five *tīrthas* of Puri—Markandeya tank, Swetaganga tank, Indradyumna tank, the Rohinī Kuṇḍa in front of the Bimalā temple in the inner compound of the main temple and the sea. Then to this is added seven types of mud (*sapta mrutikā*): earth from the top of a mountain (*parbata agramāti*); earth dug up by a boar's tusk (*barāha dānta khodita māti*); earth dug up by the tusk of an elephant (*gajā dānta khodita māti*); earth from both banks of a river (*nadi duikuḷara māti*); earth from the house of a courtesan (*beśyā ghara māti*); earth dug up by the tusk of a rhinoceros (*gaṇḍā dānta khodita māti*); earth from a cow-pen (*gomastha māti*).

To this are added 'all the medicinal herbs' (*sarba auṣadi*) and the five jewels (*pañcaratna*): diamond (*hīrā*); sapphire (*nīla*); ruby (*māṇikya*); another type of sapphire (*baidurjya*); an unidentified jewel called 'the gate of the womb' (*garbhaduāra*).

This completes the contents of the vessel. On the outside the vessel will be smeared with curd and white rice and is then placed on a heap of rice. On the mouth of the jar are placed leaves from five different types of trees: mango leaves (*āmba*); leaves of the peepul tree (*aśwattha*); leaves of the fig tree (*udumbhara*); of the banyan tree (*bara*); and leaves from the gmelina arborea (*gambhārī*). On top of these five kinds of leaves is placed a coconut.

The *rājaguru* invites by *mantra*-s the waters of the seven seas in it and invites all the gods to reside in it and performs a worship (*pūjā*) of this vessel.

While the king is sitting on the throne with a silk cloth held over him by four persons, the *rājaguru* sprinkles water from this vessel on the king's head reciting set formulas in Sanskrit (*mantras*). By these recitations the *rājaguru* transforms the king into a god. In the words of one of the *rājagurus*: 'To make him a god we have to do this; even if he is a man we imagine (*kalpana*) him to have the form of a god, giving this *mantra*. That is the *abhiṣeka*.'

The *rājaguru* will also offer mud from the Ganges to the vessel and then touch that mud to the king's head and according to him this signifies that the earth (*bhūmi*) is given to the king.

The wives of the *rājagurus* and other married women do a *bandāpanā* to the king while the devadasis sing the auspicious song. At the highlight of the rituals the trumpet (*kāhāliā*) is sounded. At the close of this ceremony the king views the deities in the palace and then bows his head in front of his mother.

The vessel prepared and worshipped whose waters will be used to

sprinkle the king, is the prototypical 'full vessel' (*purṇa kumbha*), a symbol of auspiciousness; it is painted on the door frames of Puri houses on the occasion of weddings (see photographs and description in Chapter 2). The content of this royal vessel is water and earth. The earth dug up by the tusks of a boar, elephant, and rhinoceros represent the sexual union of the king with the earth. The boar incarnation of Viṣṇu tells of this God rescuing the sinking earth and lifting her on his tusk and taking her to his abode to marry her. One of the wives of Jagannātha is Bhūdevī, the earth goddess. Plowing the earth is a metaphor for sexual union; plowing and sowing are equated with sexual intercourse since during the festival of the earth's menses (*raja sankranti*), the farmers do not plow and they do not sow. They also refrain from sexual intercourse with their wives. The elephant is a royal symbol, especially appropriate for the king of Puri who is the Lord of the Elephants (*Gajapati*). According to the art historian Moti Chandra, the rhinoceros was also associated with royal rituals. He gives a reference to that effect from the Mahābhārata:

> The rhinoceros horn also served as cornucopia which was used for lustrating a king at some special ceremony. It is said in the Mahābhārata (VIII.6.37) that Duryodhana while appointing Karṇa to the title of the Commander-in-Chief lustrated him with the sacred water filled in the hollowed tusk of an elephant, and the horn of a rhinoceros and a bull (1973:34).

The earth from the cow-pen brings to mind the images of the king milking the earth-cow. In the words of Dumont: 'He gets hold of the earth, the cow of plenty, and distributes its produce in a manner at once generous and hierarchical . . . Pṛthu . . . as . . . the milk of the cow-earth, ensures the perpetuation of all beings' (Dumont 1970a: 72–3).

About earth from the mountain top Veena Das is of the opinion that it refers to staticity (1978:11) and Inden writes the following:

> In my view, it is this rite of daubing that effects a kind of extraordinary marriage of the king and the earth, his bride. A perusal of the table makes it clear that this union of the king and the earth was meant to strengthen the king's body. All of the clays come from locations on the earth's surface where bodily sizes or functions are greatly concentrated. By bringing the clays from their widely dispersed but 'natural' sites and centralizing them in the person of the king, the parts of his body are greatly strengthened (1977:45).

Both Inden and Das' studies are based on Puranic material from between the 8th and the thirteenth century AD on the king's coronation.

The parts about the various types of earth used in the ceremony is, however, not included in the vessel but constitutes a separate 'clay bath' of the king. From a total of fifteen kinds of earth mentioned in these texts, five are the same as those used in Puri.[14]

I would suggest that the strengthening of the body of the king with earth from the top of a mountain derives from an association between mountains and food. Parvatī meaning 'daughter of the mountain' is also called Annapurṇā meaning 'full of food' (O'Flaherty 1973:235). In Braj, the mountain Govardhana, meaning 'increaser of cattle', is worshipped with a 'mountain of food' (*annakūṭa*) (Vaudeville 1980).

The mud from rivers and from the courtesan's house can also be taken to refer to an abundance of crops as the discussion of the sexuality of the devadasis in Chapter 3 indicates.

The medicinal herbs represent bodily well-being and health; they are another expression of auspiciousness. The physician of the gods with his herbs is churned up during the churning of the ocean, as are jewels, a tangible form of wealth and prosperity. The myth of the churning of the ocean is—as I will argue later on—principally concerned with auspiciousness.

The vessel itself is called 'the increaser'. The king, in union with the earth, becomes upon his coronation, the increaser of the realm. Coomaraswamy specifically links the king, the fertility of the realm, and the full-vessel;

> The full vessels regularly carried by river goddesses (*nadidevatās* . . .), who can fairly be called Apsarases in the original sense of the word (water-nymphs, of the indian derivation *apsurasa*) may also be noted (. . .), and likewise the universal Indian custom of offering a full vessel to an honored deity or guest (. . .)
>
> At this point further attention must be called to one of the most characteristic features of the Grail legend and of Indian culture, though the idea is widespread elsewhere, viz., the direct connection between the virtue (moral and physical) of the king, and the fertility (dependent on rainfall) of the country over which he rules. This motif is . . . constantly met in Indian literature at all periods . . . . We have already seen in Varuna the ideal prototype of the righteous, justice-dispensing, king, who makes the rains fall and the rivers flow, and so bestows fruitfulness upon the whole world (1971:40–1).

Later on in the book (pp. 61–4) Coomaraswamy devotes a paragraph to the full vessel which he calls 'the commonest of all auspicious symbols' and a symbol of life, health, and wealth.

Upon his coronation the king of Puri becomes the sacrificer

(*jajamāna*) for the temple and previously, when the kings still had a territory, for the whole realm. Although normally to become a sacrificer one has to be a householder (*karttā*), in other words one has to be married, in the case of the Puri king this requisite is waived. When I asked one of the *rājaguru* how it was that the king could be the *jajamāna* without being a householder he answered as follows:

> Jagannātha's works cannot be stopped. We are there as the king's representatives. The work is done by us. He gives us a betel and we fulfill the works. He gives us that power (*kyamatā*). But in common situations one can become a sacrificer only after one has a wife.

Thus the 'full' affusion of the king can only take place after he is married and that is called a 'complete, whole, full' (*sampūrṇa*) ceremony whereas the enthronement of an unmarried king is called 'incomplete' (*asampurṇa*). The reason given by the *rājagurus* is that without a wife a man is not 'full-limbed' or 'full-bodied' (*pūrṇānga*) since a man is the half-body (*arddhānga*) and the wife is also the half-body (*arddhāngini*) and it is only when they are joined that a complete body is created. If these two half bodies are not joined then 'they will have no right to do any dharmic works' (*tā nahele tānkara kaunasi dharma kārjya upare adhikāra rahiba nāhī*; said by one of the *rājagurus*). The *rājagurus* also pointed out to me that this is true in their own case. They cannot perform any ceremonies if they are not married or are widowed. Trinayana put it to me thus: 'What right does a bachelor have?' (*Bachelor-ra keūthi kaaṇa adhikāra rahilā*?; he used the English word 'bachelor' with an Oriya case ending).

Thus after the king's wedding the *puṣyābhiṣeka* can be celebrated and is supposed tc be celebrated every year on the same date. *Puṣya* is the name of a constellation, but another form of this word, namely *puṣṭa*, means 'nourished', 'fed'. The same rite appears to have been performed since ancient times and Gonda, on the basis of textual descriptions, writes the following about this ceremony:

> . . . . intended to keep the king in good condition and to prevent him from being hurt by evil; it is explicitly called the most efficacious rite for appeasing evil influences (*śānti*-) and for allaying evil portents (*utpātāntakara*); it is a *mangala*—a solemn auspicious ceremony producing or stimulating welfare and happiness . . . besides it is as a matter of course, conducive to longevity, increase of progeny, and happiness . . . . A repeated performance of this ceremony at the time of the moon's conjunction with the lunar mansion Puṣya makes happiness, renown and wealth increase. From this constellation

it has its name Puṣyasnāna . . . . However, this name is an omen, *puṣya*—meaning also 'nourishment,' or 'the best or uppermost of anything' (Gonda 1957:46, 49).

That ceremony is essentially the same as the one described above. But besides the vessel containing the water and earth there is also another vessel containing clarified butter (*ghruta*) with which the king and the queen are anointed. The *mantra*-s that are recited are the same but everything is doubled because everything is done to the queen also. A curtain is stretched in front of the throne and the *rājagurus*, after having purified the articles and reciting the *mantras*, pass them to their wives who do whatever has to be done for the queen.

In the absence of a queen, however, the *rājagurus* perform an *abhiṣeka* to the throne (*gadi*). They place a sword on the king's seat and a betel on the queen's seat; by each side of the throne they place an image of Rāma and Sītā.

The association between the *abhiṣeka* and Rāma and Sītā is expressed during the *abhiṣeka* of Jagannātha which takes place on the full moon day of the month of *pauṣa* (Dec.–Jan.). Usually the *puṣya* constellation is visible very close to that date, within two or three days after it, and sometimes it coincides with the full moon day. The *abhiṣeka* of Jagannātha in the temple is also performed by *śāsan* brahmins and not by the temple servant brahmins. On that day Jagannātha is dressed as Rāma and his wife as Sītā. The affusion is performed on a mirror placed in a basin which catches the deities' reflection.

When I asked one of the devadasis whether the *abhiṣeka* could be performed for an unwed king she answered as follows: 'Before marriage the *abhiṣeka* cannot be done. How can it be done to a single king? Remember how Rāma's *abhiṣeka* was done with Sītā at his side?' Then I asked her whether the enthronement (*gādināsina*) of the king was not an *abhiṣeka* and she replied: 'Yes, that's an *abhiṣeka*, but what kind of an *abhiseka*?'

After the anointing ceremony at the *puṣyābhiṣeka* the king comes to the audience hall where a representative from each of the *śāsan* villages has come along with the servant of the village temple. Earlier (the date was not given to me by the *rājagurus*) there were representatives from all forty-one *śāsan* each accompanied by a temple servant, namely a total of eighty-two persons. But today only the representatives of the *śāsan* villages of the Khurdā kingdom come. They bring what is called 'the gold sacred thread' (*sunā paitā*). It used

to be made of three strands of gold but nowadays it can be made of silver or brass but it is still called 'the golden thread'. These threads are handed to an officer of the king who in.turn hands them to the *rājaguru* who then touches the king's forehead with them while reciting the sacred thread *mantra*. After this, the temple servants are separated from the *śāsan* brahmins who are sitting in front of the throne. The *rājaguru* brings the king down from his throne and the king circumambulates the assembled brahmins and then does a full body prostration (*sastānga pranāma*) in front of them and the brahmins bless the king (*asirbāda*, *kalyāna*) by wishing him long life and prosperity.

It seems to me that one can see from the previous discussion of the king's coronation why weddings have so many royal traits. The king's coronation is also a symbolic union with the earth and a transformation of the king into a potent increaser of the fertility of the realm and its general well-being and prosperity. Gonda in the same article on kingship quotes from the Vājasaneya Saṃhitā the following:

> The impulse (furtherance) of that special power substance which manifests itself in vegetative life and increase of possessions (*vājasya prasavḥ*) prevailed over all these worlds, in all directions, from days of yore the king goes about knowing, increasing the people, and the well-being (*puṣṭi*—'a well-nourished condition amongst us') (Vāj. Saṃh. 9, 25; Sat. Br. 5, 2, 2, 7) (1956:41).

Marriage, like the coronation, has as its purpose the increase through progeny, the well-being and the prosperity of the household and the lineage. In the case of the king, the household is the whole realm. The identification between the king and fertility is so close that, along with Gonda, I interpret the reference of the poet Kalidāsa (in his play *Raghuvaṃsa* 4, 20) to 'women who whilst keeping watch over the rice fields sang the praises of the king' as a fertility rite (Gonda 1956:42).[15]

The paintings of 'full vessels' and fishes around the door frames of the houses of Puri on the occasion of a wedding are both fertility and royal symbols. The fish is one of the marks on the feet of a 'wheel wielding king' (*cakravartin*).

In one of the paintings around the entrance to a house in Puri, the association between the full pot and the coronation ceremony is made explicitly. In it, there are two full pots topped by leaves and a coconut, flanked by two fishes and a creeper design that goes all

around the door. Above the full pots are two women; on the upper right hand side of the door is a painting of the *abhiṣeka* of Rāma (see Pl. 7).

The New Regnal Year Ceremony

Marking the king's new regnal year is a privilege of the Gajapati only. None of the feudatory kings counted their reign from their coronation. Time was kept according to the central king's reign. This privilege, along with that of having the right to write royal letters to the feudatory chiefs, is still the Gajapati's alone. The regnal year is called *anka*. The first *anka* is the year that the king has been enthroned. The ceremony is performed not on the anniversary of the coronation but on a fixed date, namely the twelfth day of the bright fortnight of the month of Bhādraba (Aug.–Sept.). It is called 'the golden' (*suniā*).

On that day the feudatory kings used to come to Puri to attend this ceremony and they brought with them presents of money or clothes for the king. According to the *rājagurus*, the feudatory kings stopped coming for the ceremony after independence. It is remarkable that they came until then since the king of Puri had long since lost sovereignty over these states.

The ceremony consists of imprinting the new regnal year by means of gold seals on small tablets of wood. The presence of the astrologer, the *deis* and the devadasis is required. The latter two groups sing auspicious songs.

The gold seals are prepared by goldsmiths and they have on them engraved the regnal year number as well as the lunar day (*tithi*). There are twenty-seven such seals made. In the palace there are another set of twenty-seven seals of the same size on which pairs of deities are engraved such as the boar incarnation of Viṣṇu and the earth goddess (Barāha and Bhūdevi), Lakṣmī and Nrusingha, Rādhā and Krisna, Durgā and Mādhaba and so forth. Twenty-seven small thin tablets of wood are prepared on which the design of a fish is drawn. The seals with the deities are impressed on these tablets on the fish's head and the numbered seals are impressed on the reverse side of the tablet. This action is called 'cutting the regnal year' (*anka koṭāre*). After these tablets have been thus impressed they are placed on a silver tray. The *rājaguru* picks up each tablet in turn and while reciting the *mantra* of the deities represented on them, touches the tablets to the king's head.

The fish, encountered elsewhere, is found here as a royal symbol.

The fact that the deities on the seals are all couples is significant in the light of what has been said above. The blessing of the divine pairs are brought down on the king and the fertility of the realm during this new year is expressed by engraving it on the image of a fish.

Durgā Pūjā and Dasaharā

Although these are two separate festivals I have placed them together because they are clearly connected. Dasaharā takes place the day after the last day of Durgā *pūjā* and some of the offerings of this latter worship are also offered to the deities worshipped at Dasaharā. The two festivals are also connected mythically.

This festival starts on the eighth day of the dark fortnight of *āświna* (Sept.–Oct.) and lasts for sixteen days. It is also sometimes called the sixteen days worship (*solāpūjā*). It is observed in the main temple as well where goddess Bimalā is worshipped. The image of goddess Kanaka Durgā (Gold Durgā) in the palace is moved to a specially prepared pavilion in the palace compound. The worship is inaugurated by a sprinkling (*abhiṣeka*) of the goddess with water from a 1,000 pots. Then for sixteen days, the normal ritual day as it is carried out in the main temple is also performed for Kanaka Durgā. She is offered food five times a day, two light meals and three main meals in the morning, midday, and evening and at night the ritual of the 'great decoration' (*baḍa simhāra*) is performed. As in the case of goddess Bimalā in the temple, the food for this offering is cooked by the brahmin servants of the palace but it is offered by the *rājagurus* and male members of their family.

Every afternoon, between the midday meal and the evening meal, the image of the goddess is placed on a conveyance called *bimāna*, carried by eight men of the cowherd caste and taken outside on the main road for a procession which is called a 'promenade' (*brahmaṇi*). The procession, according to several devadasis, is accompanied by a representative from each of the three female servants, a *dei*, a devadasi of the inner division and one from the outer division. All three women dance when the procession stops in front of one of the monasteries not far from the palace, on the main road. But according to one of the *rājagurus* the women do not dance during the procession but during the daily evening food offering in front of the goddess inside the palace.

When the procession returns, the image of the goddess is placed on a special elevated place near the worship pavilion and there is given,

everyday, certain offerings such as on one day a tooth brush, on another a mirror, on yet another a comb, then *sindura*, etc. . . .

On the fifteenth and the sixteenth day of this festival, which corresponds respectively to the eighth and the ninth day of the bright fortnight of *āświna* (these two days are called the 'great eighth' and the 'great ninth'), in the night animals are sacrificed to the goddess. This animal sacrifice in the palace was stopped ten years ago by the present king's widowed mother. In the temple of Bimalā, in the main temple compound, animal sacrifice is still done on the three last days of the festival.

The actual killing of the animals is not done by a brahmin but by a *śūdra*. The offering is done by the *rājagurus*. On the eighth day five rams are killed, one of which is called 'the sacrifice for the guardians of the directions' (*digbali*). On the ninth day three rams are sacrificed, one being for the guardians of the directions. To those guardians are offered rice balls soaked in the blood of the sacrificial animal. This concludes the worship. However, the goddess is not yet removed to her regular abode in the palace. She stays in the pavilion specially erected for this festival during the next day, called *dasaharā*.

Trinayana told me that previously elephants were sacrificed and that this is commemorated by the fact that on the 'great eighth' and the 'great ninth' days, cakes called 'elephant's head' (*gajamunda*) are sent from the temple to the palace.

Dasaharā

The meaning of this word according to my informants is 'ten' (*dasa*), 'ruined' (*harā*) and refers to the fact that on this day, according to one version, Rāma killed the ten-headed Rāvaṇa and according to another version, Rāma after worshipping Durgā, started for his victorious war against Rāvaṇa on this day.

The day is also called 'the victorious tenth' (*bijaya daśami*) because on that day Rāma worshipped Durgā and became victorious. On that day kings used to start on their wars (*judha jātrā*) because it is believed that if they start on that day they will be victorious like Rāma. The day was also called by Trinayana 'the festival of the victory of Durgā' (*durgānkara bijaya uścaba*), referring to the fact that it was thanks to Durgā that Rāma killed Rāvaṇa.

The central event of that day is the worship of the weapons by the king and his symbolic conquering of the ten directions. Near the place where the worship of Kanaka Durgā took place the previous

sixteen days, a platform of sand is erected on which are placed in a circle ten plantain leaves, representing the ten directions.[16]

At the throne of the king a worship of the deity Baruna is performed by the *rājagurus* and the preparation and worship of the 'increaser vessel' (*barddhanī kaḷaśa*) is done, which will later be used for sprinkling the king. Then the *rājagurus* do an 'auspiciousness giving' ritual (*mangaḷa āropaṇa*) to the king and queen which consists of touching them with the following auspicious objects: earth, lamp, fruit, shavings from a cow's horn, mirror, curd, clarified butter, incense, perfume, seeds and ornaments. While this is being done the *deis* and the devadasis sing the auspicious song.

Then the married women perform a *bandāpanā*. The *rājagurus* proceed with the king and the queen's affusion (*abhiṣeka*). As in the coronation ceremony a silk cloth is held over the royal couple by four persons while the brahmins sprinkle the water from the 'increaser vessel' on the head of the king and the queen.

The king, accompanied by the *rājagurus*, then goes to the place where the ten directions have been set up. Weapons have been placed there. The king offers flowers to the weapons and the *rājaguru* touches each weapon to the king's forehead.

Everyone proceeds to the pavilion where goddess Kanaka Durgā is still installed. A garland and a black, red, and yellow sari from the image of Jagannātha have arrived from the main temple. The *rājaguru* ties the sari around the head of the king who bows to him and he in turn blesses him. The king then gives a sari to each of the *rājagurus* who tie it around their own heads.

The *rājagurus* proceed to offer balls of rice to the ten directions. These are placed on ten plantain leaves. The king takes hold of a bow and arrow and shoots an arrow in each of the ten directions. After this the king offers flowers to the royal umbrella which on this day is held by a brahmin servant and not a *śūdra*. He also does an offering of flower to the goad of the elephant (*ankuṣa*).[17]

The king then sits in the audience hall and watches a dance performed by three women, one from each class of female servants.

The last event of this day is a procession of the representative images of Jagannātha—namely Mādan Mohan—Baḷabhadra—Rāmakruṣṇa—and an image of Durgā and Mādhaba. These images are placed on a chariot (*ratha*) and taken on the main road to the same place where the image of Kanaka Durgā had been taken the previous sixteen days. That place is called the *dasaharā* field. There the king

comes and does *bandāpanā* to the deities. He also offers flowers, waves the fly-whisk and the fan. A food offering is done by the brahmin temple servants.

Such a festival is reminiscent of a very similar festival held in the medieval period and described by Inden. That festival is called the 'conquest of the quarters' (*dig-vijaya*). Inden writes that these rituals, preliminary to the event of conquest 'were dialectically related to those of the annual ritual bath . . . . Furthermore these powers were to be obtained not as a result of the compassionate grace of a high god but as a result of a bargain struck: the conqueror promised portions of sacrificed meat, just the sort of dish these bloodthirsty deities would relish, if they came to his aid' (1978:29).

Although this festival is connected to the blood sacrifices to Kanaka Durgā, it is very clear that the high god, Jagannātha, is the one who orders the conquest of the quarters by the king. Previous to the symbolic conquest of the quarters by the act of shooting an arrow into each of the ten balls of rice representing the ten directions, the king and the *rājagurus* tie a sari from Jagannātha around their heads. Receiving a garland and a sari from the deity is the expression of an order from the deity. The *rājagurus*, as mentioned earlier, were also the generals of the army. It is by the order of Jagannātha that the king and his generals conquer the ten directions. This reminds us of the Kāñcī Kāveri legend where Puruṣottama Dev succeeded in conquering the southern kingdom of Kāñcī because Jagannātha and Baḷabhadra themselves, mounted on a white and black horse respectively, went in battle with the king.

Kanaka Durgā is the palace deity, the personal deity of the king. She is a form of Durgā and is closely associated with weapons and battle. In iconography Durgā is represented holding weapons in her eight arms, often in the act of slaying the buffalo demon. In the myth which recounts this incident, Durgā receives from all the male gods their weapons. She is the only one who can successfully battle the buffalo demon. In the ritual just described she is associated with the ownership of the weapons by the king as well as the symbolic conquest of the directions. The timing of the festival links it on the one hand mythologically with Rāma's successful war against Rāvaṇa, and on the other hand historically with the traditional season when kings used to sally forth to conquer enemy territory.

The link between the king and Jagannātha can be interpreted as the fact that this deity is the supreme sovereign of Orissa and that the

king as his earthly representative acts on his behalf. The sari of Jagannātha is tied around the head of the king in front of the image of the goddess for it is the goddess who makes kings victorious; this is made explicit in the reference to Rāma's worship of Durgā prior to his battle with Rāvaṇa. The worship of the weapons culminates the sixteen day worship of the goddess. During the sixteen days of worship the goddess is offered objects such as a comb, a mirror and especially *sindura*, the red powder which married women put on their forehead and on the parting of their hair. It seems clear that the power of arms is a female power.

The victorious king is the one who increases the territory and the power of the kingdom. A victorious king conquers the enemies of the kingdom and thereby averts its downfall, its destruction, its impoverishment. All these calamities are the opposite of the prosperous kingdom; they are manifestations of inauspiciousness. The mythical antagonists of both Durgā and Rāma are demons, *mahiṣāsura* the buffalo demon and Rāvaṇa respectively. The association between demons (*āsura* or *daityā*) and inauspiciousness will be explored in the context of the car festival in which a group of temple servants called *daitā*-s, meaning 'demons', play a central role. These *daitā*-s are the ones who according to the devadasis 'do the inauspicious (*amangaḷa*) work in the temple'.

The source of inauspiciousness can be identified as residing either in the potentially destructive enemy or in the absence of increase in the form of progeny, rain, and wealth in general. When it resides in the former, its antidote is goddess Durgā and when it resides in the latter its antidote is goddess Lakṣmī, the wife of Jagannātha. In subsequent chapters, the relationship between the devadasi and Lakṣmī will be fully explored.

The common thread between all the palace rituals surveyed in this chapter is the separation of the king from inauspiciousness and his close association with the sources of auspiciousness. The most striking example of the separation of the king from inauspiciousness is his and his relatives' complete exclusion from funeral ceremonies. The fact that the king and his relatives are not affected by impurity is not sufficient explanation for their complete separation from funeral ceremonies. It can be argued that the king could play some role in the death ritual of his deceased father and still not be affected by impurity. It is not only that he as well as his relatives take no role at all in the funeral ceremonies but also that the death of the king itself is in a sense denied. When it occurs it is announced as the death of a 'foreigner' and not as the death of the king.

CHAPTER 6

Royal Temple Ritual

The devadasis perform twice daily in the temple; in the morning and in the evening. The morning ritual consists of a dance not accompanied by songs. This dance takes place simultaneously with the first major offering in the inner sanctum. This offering includes cooked food; as with all food offerings, it takes place behind closed doors. The public cannot gaze at the deities at that time. The dance of the devadasi takes place in the dance hall and by contrast, it is a public event.

Out of the three main meals offered to the deities, the morning meal is the only one to be called a 'royal offering'. The ingredients for the morning meal are sent by the palace to the temple. The dance of the devadasi is similarly called a royal offering. The morning ritual of the devadasis, unlike the evening ritual, is a royal one and it takes place in the context of the only royal offering that takes place daily in the temple.

The ritual in Jagannātha's temple follows the general pattern of worship in Vaishnavite temples with some variations peculiar to it.[1] In very broad terms, the worship consists of treating the deities as honoured persons of very high status. The deity is awakened, given fresh clothes, bathed, dressed in elaborate robes, given a light refreshment, a morning meal then a midday meal which is followed by an afternoon nap; offering of lamps, incense and perfume, an evening meal, followed by an elaborate decoration with flowers, a night refreshment and the day is concluded with a 'putting to sleep' ceremony. An Oriya saying captures the essence of worship in a pithy phrase: 'as is done for one's body so is it done for the gods' (*jathā dehe, tothā debe*).

The *pūjā paṇḍās* make the offerings at the time of the meals; the *simhāri* brahmin priests bathe, dress, and decorate the deities; the *śuāra* brahmin priests cook. Many other classes of both brahmin and non-brahmin temple servants perform innumerable other tasks.[2]

From 1817, when kings permanently moved their residence to Puri

from Khurdā (Patnaik 1977:33), kings visited the temple regularly, and their daily routine was synchronized with that of the temple.

The morning ritual of the devadasis can be performed by both inner and outer divisions. It is not performed any longer; Radha and Lalita were the last ones who performed this ritual. According to them they stopped dancing fifteen to twenty years ago. This coincides roughly with the take-over by the state government of the temple administration. I elicited descriptions of these rituals from all of the devadasis, from Trinayana whose sole ritual duty in the temple was to stand holding a golden cane while the devadasi danced, and from Sahasrakhyi. Brundabati taught me the dance which used to be performed at that time and Radha once performed it for me.

When the morning offering (*sakāḷa dhūpa*)[3] has been started, the *rājaguru* is informed of it. He comes to the temple and is handed a gold handled cane (*sunā beṭa*) by a temple servant *pradhāni*, whose duty is to call the relevant servants for the various rituals. He goes into the dance hall and stands in front of the pillar of the bird Garuda, the carrier of Viṣṇu, situated on the eastern end of the dance hall. The devadasi is already there, dressed for the dance. She dances without singing, accompanied by the drummer. She faces north while she is dancing. Before beginning her dance (which is simply called *dhūpa nāca*) she brings her palms together and bows (*anjali*) bending first in the direction of the deities and then bending to the *rājaguru*. Pilgrims and other visitors to the temple watch the dance since they cannot watch the offering which takes place behind closed doors. This ritual of the devadasi is called a 'procession' (*pātuāra*), even though no actual procession takes place. The dance ritual consists of one continuous item of pure dance, i.e. without words or interpretative gestures and expressions. It is performed by only one devadasi.

The morning meal offering is called *rājadhūpa* and the dance of the devadasi is called *rājopacāra*. The meaning of the term *rājopacāra* is threefold: (1) it can refer to the rituals the king performs, which include waving the fly-whisk and the fan; (2) it can refer to some ritual privileges such as waving the fly-whisk and the fan granted by the king to some prominent persons, such as heads of feudatory states, heads of monasteries, prominent widows, etc.; (3) it can refer to all the royal insignia. These insignia accompany the king when he goes in procession; the dancing or singing is then performed by the *deis*, not the devadasis. The royal insignia excepting the devadasis also accompany Jagannātha when the latter goes onto the chariots at

the time of the car festival. It is possible that the dance of the devadasi is called a 'procession' because it is part of the royal insignia which are usually displayed during processions.

After the food offering is completed the doors are opened and the public can witness from behind a wooden bar the offering of betel nuts (*tambula*) to the deities and the offering of camphor lamps (*karpura āḷati*). At the end of this last offering the dance stops. The devadasi leaves the temple and returns home. The golden cane of the *rājaguru* is returned to the store room by the same class of brahmin temple servant who had brought it out and the *rājaguru*, after receiving his share of the food offering, goes to a platform just outside the temple next to the southern entrance to the antechamber of the inner sanctum; this platform is the place where the king sits to discuss temple affairs after his morning visit to the temple.[4]

The food offered to the deities is then taken to the temple of Goddess Bimalā and offered to her by the same priests who offered it to the deities in the main temple. It is only after the food has been offered to this goddess that it becomes *mahāpraśād*. A portion of the food offering is sent to the palace in the same brass containers in which the raw food was sent from the palace earlier in the day for the purpose of offering it at the morning meal. The king and the queen eat this food for their midday meal. The food offered in the inner sanctum is reserved for the king, the *rājaguru*, the brahmins of the *mukti maṇḍapa*, and the priests involved in the ritual. Some special dishes are sent to the presiding deity of the king, Kanaka Durgā, and some other dishes are sent to the palace for an offering to the deity Mahābīr (Hanuman).

The morning meal offering and its attendant rituals is followed by an offering of much larger quantities of food. This food is offered not in the inner sanctum but in the 'hall of food' (*bhoga maṇḍapa*), adjacent to the dance hall on the eastern side. This food is destined for the pilgrims and is to be sold in the market situated in the outer compound of the temple (see diagram pp. 176, 177).

It is altogether remarkable that the devadasi dances in the presence of the *rājaguru*. This is the only time during the whole ritual day that this person's presence is required. The *rājaguru* is a key figure in the kingdom, of paramount importance both in the temple and the palace. His presence during the dance of the devadasi is in contrast to every other ritual action in the temple, which are all carried out by temple servants. The *rājaguru* is not a temple servant; he stands above all temple servants.

The ritual of the devadasi—which includes the presence of the *rājaguru*—is called a 'procession', even though the actors do not actually participate in a procession. The dance of the devadasi takes place in a very small area; she mostly does movements standing in one spot. The *rājaguru*, the servant who brought his cane, and the drummer actually stay in one position during the whole performance. There is thus no feature of a procession in the ritual. The word for procession—*pātuāra*—is used for the processions of the representative deities when they are taken outside the temple on various festivals, and it is also used to refer to the procession of the king when he visits the temple. The king used to come daily to the temple. This 'procession' occurred twice daily, once early in the morning at the time of the deities' bath, and once in the evening, at the time of the evening refreshment and the 'putting to sleep' ceremony. These visits by the king to the temple were synchronized to fit both in the ritual day of the palace and the temple. The king came in a procession accompanied by palace servants carrying the royal umbrellas, fly-whisks, drums and a trumpet, and most important, by one of the *rājagurus*, whose presence at the palace daily rituals is indispensable. His presence alongside the king in the temple is necessary since the temple servants cannot give directly to the king any of the left-overs of the deities. These left-overs are first handed by the officiating temple servants to the *rājaguru*, who then touches them to the forehead of the king before handing them to him.

The presence of the *rājaguru* is required in the temple on the occasion of the visit of the king and/or queen and during the dance of the devadasi, both occasions being referred to as 'processions'. The presence of the *rājaguru* during the dance of the devadasi confirms my earlier statements that the latter is a substitute for the queen; she is '*calanti devī*' and like '*calanti viṣṇu*' i.e. the king—her public appearance at the temple has to be accompanied by the *rājaguru*. Although the palace furnishes food material for other offerings, and portions of other offerings are also sent to the palace, this is the only meal which is sent from the palace in its entirety and for which both the queen and the king wait. It is also the only meal which is followed by the food offering in the 'food hall'. The dance takes place during the food offering in the inner sanctum and is immediately followed by the food offering in the food hall. The devadasi performs between the two locations, facing north, not facing the deities to the west; she dances between the two food offerings keeping them on her right and left (Pl. 9).

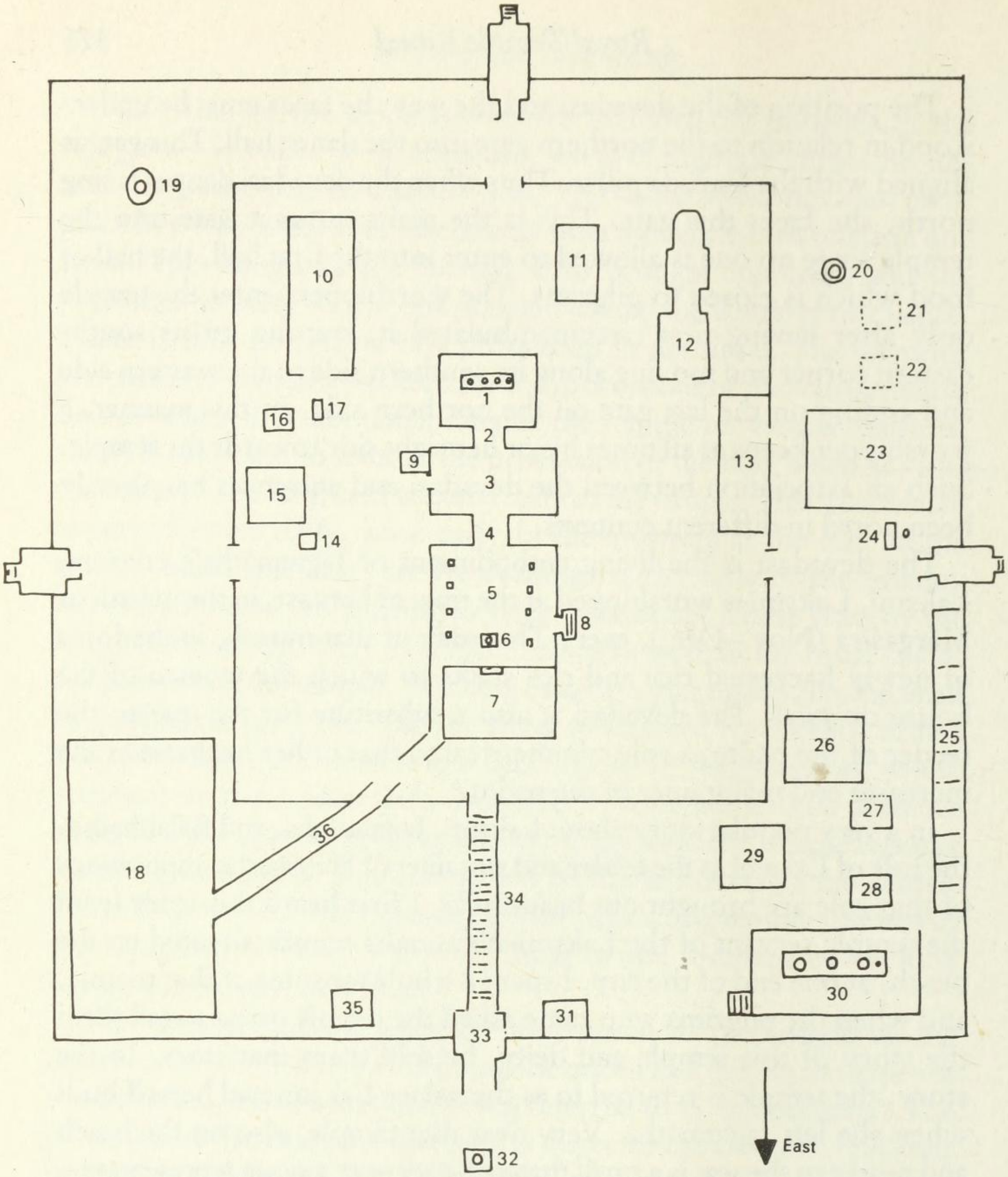
The position of the devadasi and the way she faces must be understood in relation to the northern gate into the dance hall. This gate is aligned with the Garuda pillar. Thus when the devadasi dances facing north, she faces this gate. This is the main entrance gate into the temple since no one is allowed to enter into the first hall, the hall of food which is closed to pilgrims. The worshippers enter the temple only after having first circumambulated it, starting on its south-eastern corner and moving along its southern side to the western side and ending on the last gate on the northern side. In this manner, a worshipper keeps at all times his or her right side towards the temple. Such an association between the devadasi and entrances has already been noted in different contexts.

The devadasi is the living embodiment of Jagannātha's consort, Lakṣmī. Lakṣmī is worshipped at the time of harvest, in the month of Mārgaśīra (Nov.–Dec.), every Thursday of that month, in the form of newly harvested rice and rice stalks to which the women of the house do *pūjā*. The devadasi is also a substitute for the queen, the feeder of the realm, a role symmetrical to that of her husband as the increaser and maintainer of the realm.[5]

In a very popular story about Lakṣmī, Jagannātha, and Baḷabhadra, the role of Lakṣmī as the feeder and sustainer of life and the implications of that role are brought out beautifully. I first heard this story from the temple servant of the Lakṣmī-Nrusingha temple situated on the beach, at one end of the city. I spent a whole morning at that temple, and when the pilgrims who came asked the temple priest to tell them the story of this temple and deity, he told them that story. In the story, the temple is referred to as the palace Lakṣmī had herself built when she left Jagannātha. Very near that temple, also on the beach and nearer to the sea, is a small thatched roof over a stone representation of the wheel of Viṣṇu (the *cakra*). This is one of the five pilgrimage places in Puri, the one at which the sea is worshipped, and is called *cakratīrtha*. Lakṣmī is associated with the sea, her father being Varuna, who resides in the ocean. She herself was churned out of the sea.

The following story is also read aloud at the time of the worship of Lakṣmī (*lakṣmī pūjā*) on the four Thursdays of the month of Mārgaśīra. The reading is from the Lakṣmī Purāṇa, an Oriya text by the sixteenth-century writer Balaram Dāsa.[6]

One thursday in the month of Mārgaśīra when the women were observing Lakṣmī pūjā, Lakṣmī went to her husband Jagannātha and asked him permission to go out and visit the houses in the town where her pūjā was



Simplified Diagram of the Temple

Based on the plan of the temple published in the *Record of Rights*, Government of Orissa, 1955.

In this diagram only the most important structures, as well as those mentioned in the text, are included. Besides these there are 85 more small temples and images. Of these about 25 are of Śiva or Ganeś and about 53 are of various incarnations of Viṣṇu; only 7 are to goddesses. Besides temples there are at least 80 store rooms to keep articles of worship, treasures, the movable images, food, wood for the kitchen fires, flowers, pots, etc.

1. Inner sanctum (*bhitara pokhariā*)
2. Gate: *Kalā Hāta duāra.*
3. Outer sanctum (*bāhāra pokhariā*)
4. Victory, Victory Gate (*jaya bijaya duāra*)
5. Dance or audience hall (*nāta maṇḍira, jagamohan*)
6. The Pillar of Garuda (*garuda stambha*)
7. The food hall (*bhoga maṇḍapa*)
8. The main northern entrance to the main temple.

The Main Temple

9. The platform where the king sits (*beharaṇa*)
10. Temple of Bimalā
11. Temple of Bhubaneśwarī, Sarasvatī, Ṣaṣṭhī, Savitrī, Gayatrī.
12. Temple of Lakṣmī
13. Temple of the sun with image from Konarak
14. Temple of the Sun
15. Mukti Maṇḍapa
16. Water-play platform (*jaḷa kriḍā maṇḍapa*).
17. The pond of Rohinī (*Rohinī kuṇḍa*)
18. The kitchen
19. Well in the Garden
20. Another well in the garden
21, 22. Temporary structure at the time of Naba Kalebara
23. Burial ground of the Images (*koili Vaikhuṇṭa*)
24. Temple of Sitaḷā with its 'golden well' (*suna kuā*)
25. Market stalls; sweet shops
26. Place where pilgrims eat *mahāpraśād*
27–29 Places where *mahāpraśād* is sold

Ānanda Bazar

30. The bathing platform (*snāna bedi*)
31. The 'gazing pavilion' (*cāhāṇi maṇḍapa*)
32. The pillar of the sun, brought from the sun temple of Konarak, (*aruṇa stambha*)
33. The main eastern gate: Lion Gate (*siṃhaduāra*)
34. The 'Twenty-two Steps' (*baiśi pāhāca*)
35. The 'meeting pavillion' (*bheṭa maṇḍapa*)
36. Passage way from the kitchen to the main temple used by the cooks to bring the food for the offering.

being carried out. [The day before the pūjā the women of the house draw, among other designs, footprints with rice powder. These are called Lakṣmī-pāda, the feet of Lakṣmī, and they lead from all the entrances of the house towards the place of pūjā in the worship room. All the footprints are carefully drawn going in the direction of the worship room and not the opposite direction. It is hoped and expected that Lakṣhmī will come into the house and bring her blessings.]

Jagannātha granted her the permission to go out in the city. Lakṣmī went out and visited all the houses in many towns. She was not satisfied since no one was doing her pūjā very well. She became quite dejected and decided to leave the city and out of curiosity to go and look at what those who lived outside of the city boundary were doing. Thus going she entered into the lane of the Caṇḍāḷas [generic term referring to untouchables]. Lakṣmī, hearing the prayers of a Caṇḍāḷunī [wife of a Caṇḍāḷa] who was invoking her, was attracted towards the house where the song was coming from. The song of the Caṇḍāḷunī went like this:

I salute you, Oh mother, wife of Hari
I am low born and I do not know anything
I am a caṇḍāḷunī, living in the lane of the caṇḍāḷas.
Whatever devotion I may have, please accept it, Oh Kamaḷinī.

Lakṣmī, hearing this song, went inside the house of the Caṇḍāḷunī to the worship room. There Lakṣmī found that her pūjā was being carried out beautifully and she became very happy and told the woman that she would grant her any boon that she wanted. After granting her the boons and accepting the food offering [*bhoga*] of the untouchable, Lakṣmī returned to the temple. That day Jagannātha and his elder brother Baḷabhadra had gone out hunting. However, Baḷabhadra, through his yogic powers, knew what Lakṣmī had done, and before returning to the temple, spoke to his younger brother thus: 'Look, look, brother, how your wife behaves; she has gone to the house of a caṇḍāḷunī. She would also have entered the houses of sweepers (*hāḍis*) and other untouchable caste (*pānas*). Without taking a bath she will enter the great temple and will pollute us two brothers. If you need your wife you better go and build yourself a palace in the lane of the Caṇḍāḷas pretty soon. Listen to me and drive her away. If this sort of wife stays, there will be no good.' Jagannātha pleaded with his brother in the following way: 'Brother, if we drive her away, will we ever be able to get a wife like Lakṣmī? If she has done wrong let us do the following: let us invite the people of Heaven (*swarga*) and giving five hundred thousand rupees we will purify our caste. If she behaves wrongly again, then we will drive her out. This is a promise. Listen, Oh elder brother, without knowing, the daughter of the ocean [Lakṣmī] has done wrong only once; Oh brother, forgive her fault.' Upon hearing this, in anger Baḷabhadra answered thus: 'If your Lakṣmī stays, I am leaving! A wife really is only the shoe which covers the foot. If one has a

brother then one can get a crore (ten million) of wives. Oh Jagannātha, if you greedily crave for your wife, you better go and build yourself a palace in the lane of the Caṇḍāḷas. Don't come in my great temple. Stay with your wife outside of baḍadānda [the main road which goes from the temple to the outskirts of town].' This finally convinced Jagannātha who agreed to drive Lakṣmī away.

The two brothers then returned to the temple and waited for Lakṣmī at the main gate. Lakṣmī was just then returning from her tour of the town. Arriving at the gate she said to Jagannātha: 'Move out of the way, I am going in.' Jagannātha answered: 'Oh, Lakṣmī, have you become mad? Why did you go to the lane of the Caṇḍāḷas? Before I knew of this, my elder brother found out about it. If only I had known of it, I would have kept it a secret.' Lakṣmī said: 'You gave your permission for me to visit all the houses and now you are driving me out?' Jagannātha became furious and said: 'Your father is full of salt and makes a deadly roar [Varuna, the Ocean]. You, his daughter, have all the bad qualities.' Lakṣmī answered: 'You stayed in the houses of Gopālas [referring to Jagannātha as Krishna in Brundāban]; and you ate their left-overs and you also ate the left-over fruits from the Śabari [referring to Jagannātha when he was worshipped in the forest by the tribals, *Śabaras*, and offered fruits which had first been tasted]; if a wife does some wrong, the husband sets it right.' Jagannātha said: 'I'll always give you many baskets of rice. In a few days I'll ask my brother's permission and I'll bring them to you. I will never disobey my brother.' Lakṣmī said: 'I am not a widow. I have my father to look after me and I am going to his place.' Thus saying, Lakṣmī took out all her ornaments and gave them to Jagannātha telling him: 'Take all this and don't blame me as a thief. Give these to your new wife. I am leaving as a low and helpless one. Receive my curse, Oh Bhābagrāhi [another name of Jagannātha]. If the sun and the moon really move, Ah Jagannātha, you won't get any food. You will be poor for twelve years. You won't be able to get food, clothes or water. When I, a Caṇḍāḷunī give you food, then you will eat!'

Lakṣmī left accompanied by her female attendants (*dāsī*-s). She didn't go to her father's house but went to the sea shore where she asked Biśwakārma [the heavenly architect] to build her a palace. Then Lakṣmī asked the goddess of sleep—Nidrādevī—to put Jagannātha and Baḷabhadra to sleep. Then Lakṣmī asked the eight *betāḷas* [ghost-like beings] to bring to her new palace all the things that were in the temple: all the kitchen utensils, all the stores of food and all the water that was in the temple, leaving it completely dry. She also ordered them to bring all the valuables from the store rooms and also told them to eat all the food that had been cooked. Then she requested Saraswatī [Jagannātha's other wife] to cooperate with her and tell all the people not to give food or water to the two brothers if and when they came begging.

Two days later the brothers awoke from their sleep and saw that no one was in the temple. They were very, very hungry and wanted to eat, but no one offered them anything. So they went outside looking for food. They went to the store but found it completely empty. So Baḷabhadra said: 'Oh, brother, there is nothing here for life sustenance. Let's go out and beg for our food and in that way we will be able to live.' They went to the houses of the brahmin temple servants but no one recognized them; everyone took them to be robbers and thieves. They went to one of the large tanks in the town but found it bone dry. They then wandered for twelve years. Finally they arrived at the gate of Lakṣmī's palace and begged for food. The *dāsīs* reported to Lakṣmī who gave raw food which the *dāsīs* gave to the two brothers. But Lakṣmī requested Agni [the fire god] to help her and not to cook the brother's food. When Jagannātha and Baḷabhadra tried to cook they could not light the fire which only produced smoke. In disgust and despair they broke their cooking pots and Baḷabhadra told Jagannātha to eat the food of that Caṇḍāḷunī. They asked the *dāsīs* to request their mistress to send food to them. Lakṣmī upon getting the news, cooked wonderful food and the two brothers ate it with great pleasure. At the end of the meal Lakṣmī ordered the *dāsīs* to serve a special cake, called '*poḍāpithā*.' When Jagannātha ate that cake, he thought: 'This could only have been cooked by Lakṣmī. This must be her palace.' He told this to his brother who told him to go inside and fetch Lakṣmī back. Jagannātha went in, saw Lakṣmī and requested her to come back to the great temple. Lakṣmī said: 'I will go on one condition: that you promise me that the food that I cook for you, your *praśād*, will be eaten by everyone, brahmin and *caṇḍāḷa* alike and they will not wash their hands. The brahmin will take food from the *hāḍi*'s [sweeper] hand.' Jagannātha granted this to Lakṣmī and she returned with them to the temple very happy.[8]

This wonderful story says perfectly what many a scholarly word would only approximate. Without Lakṣmī there is no food, no life-sustenance. The story also accounts for one of the remarkable features of the temple of Jagannātha. *Mahāpraśād* can be eaten by everyone alike; out of the same pot the brahmin and the untouchable sweeper can both eat, and neither of them washes his hands but cleans them by wiping them on his hair. This does not mean that the power of Lakṣmī has totally abrogated hierarchy. The untouchables could not enter into the temple until fairly recently. Even Mahatma Gandhi's special visit and plea was unsuccessful and it was not until several years after Gandhi's visit to Puri that the untouchables finally won the right to enter the temple, and that not without a fight.[9] However, it was always possible for brahmins and untouchables outside the temple to dip from the same pot of *mahāpraśād*. Where food and

cooking were concerned, Lakṣmī's anti-hierarchical demand was honoured. The power of women is the power of life and it is non-hierarchical. Lakṣmī went, at the time of her harvest festival to the house of an untouchable woman and partook of her food. The male principle—represented in the agnatic pair of brothers—is eminently concerned with hierarchy and hence with purity and pollution. That principle is voiced by the elder brother who, in this joint household, represents the head of the household. He voices the concerns of the male kin group and deprecates the female. He fairly insults Lakṣmī when he says 'the wife is the shoe of the foot'. The foot is the lowest part of the body and the lowliest hierarchically. The shoe, made of leather, is infinitely lower, a base servant to a low part of the body. Wives are something that can be procured easily, as long as an elder head of the household is present. The story not only shows the opposition between the male, agnatic hierarchical principle embodied in the rules of purity and pollution and the female life principle, but also stands as a warning to those who underestimate the power of the latter.

There is another very important theme in this story. When Lakṣmī leaves, the two brothers not only starve but they are not recognized for what they are. They are taken to be beggars and thieves, a status as far removed from kingship as that of sweeper. Thus, without Lakṣmī, sovereignty leaves Jagannātha.

In his book, *The Ritual of Battle: Krishna in the Mahābhārata*, Hiltebeitel has a chapter entitled, 'Śrī and the Source of Sovereignty', Śrī is another name for Lakṣmī. In that chapter Hiltebeitel mentions repeatedly, not only on the basis of the Mahābhārata but also on the basis of more ancient texts such as the *brāhmaṇas*, that, 'a sovereign is wedded to Śrī', 'the specific gift which Śrī bestows: royalty', 'Śrī is then repository for those virtues specifically connected with sovereignty' (1976:149, 152, 153). In particular he retells a story from the Śāntiparvan in the Mahābhārata about how Indra, in the guise of a brahmin, took from the Demon-king Prahlāda his sovereignty. This took the form of various virtues leaving Prahlāda's body in the form of shadows and then a goddess left his body:

> A goddess made of effulgence [prabhāmayī devī] came out from his body. The chief [indra] of the Daityas asked her [who she was]. So she said, 'Śrī. I dwelt happily, O hero, in you who are truly mighty [tvayi satyaparākrame]. Abandoned by you, I will leave . . . .' Then the fear of the high-souled Prahlāda became visible, and he asked her besides: 'Where are you going,

O Lotus Dweller? Surely you are a goddess devoted to truth, the supreme goddess of the world. Who is that best of brahmins? I wish to know the truth.' Śri said, 'This brahmacārin who was instructed by you is Śakra. You are robbed by him, O splendid one, of that sovereignty [aiśvaryam] which was yours in the triple world' (ibid.: 157).

Lakṣmī/Śrī, who is married to Jagannātha the supreme sovereign, when she leaves him also robs him of his sovereignty.

The hierarchical principle is voiced by the elder brother, Baḷabhadra, and not by Jagannātha who tries to plead with his brother in favour of Lakṣmī. In fact, as he tells her, if his brother had not known of Lakṣmī's behaviour, he, Jagannātha, would have been happy to disregard it and keep it a secret.

Jagannātha, as a sovereign, i.e. Jagannātha in union with Lakṣmī, represents the principle of the bountiful provider for all his subjects (*prajā*, literally 'progeny') regardless of caste distinctions.

The *dāsīs* who play the role of go-between between Lakṣmī and the two brothers, are the emissaries of Lakṣmī and the carriers of food. In the temple, at the time of the morning meal offering, the dance of the devadasi represents the food of Lakṣmī and quite appropriately it can be watched by everyone; it is a public performance, while the actual food offering to the gods takes place behind closed doors.

The *śāktas* call the dance of the devadasi at the time of the morning meal offering, Kāḷī or Śakti *ucchiṣṭa*—the 'leavings' of Kāḷī or Śakti. Śakti is female power and its leaving is food.

Like Lakṣmī the devadasis represent sovereignty (*Skt. aiśvaryam*) which stands for the principle of auspiciousness, a principle different from that of hierarchy. It is significant that the hierarchic principle is voiced by Baḷabhadra and not by Jagannātha, who is the sovereign. Jagannātha was quite willing to overlook Lakṣmī's fault. However, although the two principles are different, they have to accommodate each other. Baḷabhadra finally gives in and eats the polluted food of Lakṣmī and similarly Lakṣmī finally agrees—with a compromise solution—to return to the temple where the rules of purity and impurity have to be observed with the exception of the eating of *mahāpraśād*.

The king, although himself outside the *varṇa* scheme, has as one of his primary functions to uphold the code of conduct of all the *varṇas* and thus preserve the hierarchical ordering of society. Lakṣmī is not sovereignty herself, she is the source of sovereignty when she is in union with Jagannātha. In the story from the Mahābhārata told by

Hiltebeitel, sovereignty leaves Prahlāda in the shape of Śrī, which does not mean it resides in Śrī, but that it ceases to reside in Prahlāda and eventually is going to reside in Indra, in whom Śrī will enter. Thus sovereignty moves from Prahlāda to Indra in the form of Śrī.

Sovereignty in conjugal union is inseparable from hierarchy. Lakṣmī does return to the great temple along with Jagannātha and Baḷabhadra and in that temple rules of purity and pollution are scrupulously observed. It is true that Lakṣmī does win a concession and quite a major one at that. Jagannātha's temple is famous—or infamous depending on the milieu—throughout India for its peculiarity of allowing Brahmins and untouchables to eat out of the same pot of *mahāpraśād*. That is Lakṣmī's contribution to sovereignty, a reminder that through his bond to his wife the king is the bountiful increaser and feeder of his 'progeny', regardless of caste differentiation. A king cannot be fully a king without a wife but neither can he dispense with the advice of his brahmin counselors. In the words of Trinayana: 'The king will not take any decision without taking our advice.' The close co-operation between the king and his brahmin counselors is emphasized by Lingat in the following passage:

> As is said in a passage in the *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa* (IV.1.4.1), *brahma* is 'he who conceives' (*abhigantṛ*) and *kṣatra* 'he who does' (*katṛ*), or again, *brahma* is intelligence and *kṣatra* will . . . At bottom there is identity of function between them, but *dharma* cannot be realised without their cooperation. This principle of the essential cooperation of the two powers is one of the fundamental elements in *smṛti*'s theory of kingship (1973:216).

Thus if on the one hand a king's source of prosperity is in the presence of his wife, a form of Lakṣmī and an embodiment of a non-hierarchical auspicious principle, on the other hand the king's source of righteous ruling is in the advice of his brahmin counselors, the repositories of the knowledge of the Vedas and the Dharmaśāstras, through whom hierarchical ordering of society is preserved. The hierarchical principle in fact permeates marriage as Baḷabhadra so roughly puts it: 'The wife is the shoe of the foot.' Jagannātha has the authority to send Lakṣmī away. Lakṣmī's non-hierarchical power is awesome, however, and she wins a major concession. The point of the story, it seems to me, is that the two principles—that of auspiciousness and that of purity and pollution or hierarchy—are two indispensable ingredients of sovereignty.

The king, even though he himself is not affected by rules of purity

and impurity, is yoked to hierarchy through his relationship to his brahmin priest, the *rājaguru*. The relationship between the king and his *purohita* is sometimes spoken of as a marriage (Aitareya Brāhmaṇa VIII, 27). The king in such a marriage corresponds to the wife and embodies the principle of auspiciousness, not the principle of hierarchy. The king does not make the law, he enforces it. The law, the upholding of the rules of purity and impurity, of proper marriage and proper conduct, is interpreted by the assembly of learned brahmins. The king enforces punishment for those found guilty by the brahmins. The wife is yoked to hierarchy through her bond to her husband. The devadasis who have no husbands are not linked to hierarchy, hence their unclassifiable status of *baiśnab* or *strī jāti*. The king, like the wife, is yoked to hierarchy through the bond to his brahmin minister-priest.

Appendix 1 to Chapter 6

THE RITUAL DAY IN THE MAIN TEMPLE

For a very detailed study, including the *mantras* recited during the three main offerings, see G. C. Tripathi's article 'The Daily Pūjā Ceremony of the Jagannātha Temple and its Special Features' in *The Cult of Jagannātha and the Regional Tradition of Orissa*, edited by A. Eschmann, H. Kulke, and G. C. Tripathi, Delhi, 1978, pp. 285–308. The *pūjā* detailed in this article is the main meal offering which takes place three times a day in the temple. This study is based mostly on textual material. My own description is less detailed and covers the whole ritual day, not only the main offering.

Opening the doors

Early in the morning, around 5 a.m., a group of five temple servants come to inspect and break the mud seals that have been placed the previous night on the two doors in the main temple, one leading from the dance hall into the antechamber to the inner sanctum (*bāhāra pokhariā*), the other leading from the latter hall into the inner sanctum. On their way there they also open the four main outer gates leading into the outer compound of the temple grounds. The four servants are four brahmins (a watchman: *pratihāri*; the brahmin in charge of opening the doors: Bhitarachu Mahāpātra; a man in charge of lights: *akhanda mekāpa*; a man in charge of arranging for the articles needed in the morning worship: (*pāḷiā mekāpa*) and one *śūdra* of the potter's caste (in charge of the mud for the seal: *muduli*). Before breaking the seal to the inner sanctum, the watchman (*pratihāri*) calls out loudly, '*maṇimā*', which means 'your majesty', to wake up the deities. Some oil lamps are lit. At that time devotees and mendicants (*samnyāsi*) chant the name of god, beat on drums and on small cymbals in the dance hall. A different group of servants, including the brahmin in charge of the bed and bedding, enter the inner sanctum and remove the beds that were placed there the previous night, and keep them in a storeroom. Up to that point the door from the dance hall was only partially opened; now that door as well as a southern door leading from the outside to the antechamber to the inner sanctum are fully opened and a wooden bar is placed in front of the entrance to the inner sanctum which prevents the general public from going any further. This bar is removed only twice a day when the public is allowed to enter the inner sanctum.

Offering of the lamps (mangaḷāḷati)

The brahmin in charge of opening the doors (Bhitarachu Mahāpātra) has the

sole right to offer the camphor lamp to Jagannātha on this occasion. The lamps for Baḷabhadra and Subhadrā are offered by two *simhāri* priests. The water needed for the purification of their hands is given by another class of brahmin (*garābaḍu*) and the lamp is actually lit by yet another class of brahmin (*pāḷiā mekāpa*). This is followed by the offering of twenty-one candles, which is then followed by the offering of lamps mixed with rice paste. The burnt camphor and rice paste left over after the offering has been made are first sent to the king and then given to others. The king had supplied the camphor, rice and clarified butter used for the offering.

The change of dress (mailama)

Removing the previous day's flower garlands, garlands of *tulāsi* leaves (a species of basil sacred to Viṣṇu) and the flower nose ornaments, a priest places these on a winnowing tray which will be sent to the king. Other leftover flowers are for the priests in charge of this ritual (*simhāri*). Then the four images: Sudarśan (the pillar which is neither male nor female but male-female and is considered to represent the three other deities in their non-form aspect), Jagannātha, Baḷabhadra and Subhadrā are given fresh garments. The priest in charge of Jagannātha is also in charge of Sudarśan, there being always only three priests performing the rituals at one time.

The bath (abakāśa)

This is the ceremony of the deities' daily purificatory bath during which they brush their teeth, clean their tongues, bathe their bodies. This ritual is performed by the *simhāri* class of brahmin priests. It takes place on the ground in the depression in which the platform on which the deities' stand is placed; this depression is called the *pokhariā*. After the place is purified by sprinkling water on it, three places of worship are prepared in front of the three main deities by placing three wooden planks on which three wooden cot-like bases are placed. On these round metal mirrors are placed and the bath is actually performed on the reflection of the main deities in these mirrors. The teeth and tongue cleaners are moved in front of those mirrors; the water used for the bath to which camphor and flowers have been added is purified by reciting formulas and is poured on the mirrors. One of the tooth brushes and a portion of the bath water is sent to the palace for the king. After the bath is finished the deities are dressed once more (*mailama*).

Public viewing (sāhāṇa melā)

The wooden bar is removed and the public is allowed access to the inner sanctum. Pilgrims make offerings to the deities consisting mostly of money, although other valuables, such as jewelry, are offered. They throw their offerings on the dais (*siṃhāsana*); the money that falls on the brass plates set by the three images go into the temple fund; the money that falls outside of

these plates belongs to the priests sitting on the dais at that time. Pilgrims touch their foreheads on the edge of the dais, circumambulate the platform, and also prostrate their whole body on the ground in front of the images. They cannot, however, touch the images. If this were to happen the premises would have to be purified.

Decorating the deities (beśa lāgi)

Three *simhāri* priests decorate the three main images with silken cloths and jewelry.

Up to that point, no food has yet been cooked in the vast kitchens of the temple. Before the cooking can take place a fire sacrifice is performed in the kitchen (*homa*), the sun is worshipped in his temple near the southern gate of the inner compound (see diagram) with a fivefold offering (consisting of perfume – *gandha*; flowers – *puṣpa*; incense – *dhūpa*; lamp – *dīpa* and food – *naibedya*). This is followed by a worship of the door attendants *deities* (*duārapāla*). These three worships are performed by *pūjā paṇḍā*-s.

Morning refreshment (ballabha bhoga)

This is an offering of uncooked food performed behind closed doors as all the food offerings are. The food for this offering is supplied by the king and certain monasteries (*matha*). The actual offering is performed by the *pūjā paṇḍā*-s but as in all other cases, preparations such as purifying the place, bringing the articles needed in the worship, calling the cooks to bring the food, etc., are performed by different classes of priests. The worship is a fivefold one (there are only two kinds of *pūjā*-s: the fivefold one and the sixteenfold one. The offerings are always the same and are offered in the same manner). The food consists of parched rice mixed with sugar, grated coconut, cheese, curd and butter. After the worship is over the food is carried to the temple of Goddess Bimalā in the South West corner of the inner compound and is offered to her. This procedure is followed for all the food offerings. The food offering becomes '*mahāpraśād*' only after it has been offered to this goddess. A share of this food is sent to the king who has been waiting to break his fast until it arrives.

Morning meal (sakhāḷa dhūpa)

This is the main ritual in the temple and consists of the offerings of sixteen articles (*ṣoḍaśopacārapūjā*) including cooked food which is the most important offering. This worship mobilizes the greatest number of temple servants and lasts quite a long time. The time of actual offering is over an hour. The preparations are also quite lengthy and elaborate. After the inner sanctum has been purified by being washed with water, four rectangles are drawn with rice powder (*muruja*) on the floor in front of the four images. It is within these rectangles that the earthen pots containing the food offerings will be placed. The actual share of the gods is placed on metal plates which are placed

on the dais itself. Various classes of brahmin priests bring all the required articles and place them on the dais. When all is ready the doors are closed (to the inner sanctum and also the one leading to the dance hall). Three *pūjā paṇḍā*-s sit on the platform itself to the right of the image, facing north; the images face east. Although there are seven images on the platform, the small metallic images on either side of the image of Jagannātha representing his two wives, Lakṣmī and Biśbadhātrī (the earth goddess, also called Bhūdevī), the wooden pillar to the left of Jagannātha called Sudarśan, and a wooden miniature replica of the large Jagannātha image, also on the left but slightly back of the image of Jagannātha, called Nīlamādhaba, are worshipped by the *pūjā paṇḍā* of Jagannātha. The small wooden replica is not in fact worshipped separately, i.e. it does not have its own sacred formula (*mantra*) as all the others do. The other three images have formulae of their own and their worship is conducted along with that of Jagannātha in a very condensed form.

The *pūjā paṇḍā*-s perform an elaborate preliminary purification of their bodies as well as an identification with the deity; I will go into the details of this procedure in the next chapter. When everything is ready, a brahmin of the door-keeper class (*padhiāri*) goes to the kitchen to call the 'great cook' (*mahāsuāra*) to bring the food. The 'great cook' is the first to come bringing two earthen pots containing a special food offering. One pot contains an offering called *chandra kaṇṭi*, consisting of round shaped cakes made of black gram (*biḍi*), ginger (*adā*), black pepper (*kalā mircha*), and asaphoetida (*hingu*); the other pot contains a preparation called *adā pācheḍi*, made of green leaf vegetables with ginger. He is followed by another cook who brings an offering called *meṇḍā mundiā khecheḍi*; (*meṇḍā mundiā* means sheep's head) which consists of a preparation of rice with certain spices. These offerings are brought first and are the charge of the head of the cooks who is called the 'great cook'. The rest of the food offerings consisting of some twenty different varieties of cooked food is brought by other cooks. It is placed on the ground and a portion is put on plates on the platform. The sixteen articles of worship in this temple are the following, in order: (1) a seat (*āsana*); (2) words of welcome (*swāgata*); (3) water for washing the feet (*pādya*); (4) water for washing the face and purifying the food (*ācamanīya*); (6) a drink made mostly of milk and honey (*madhuparka*); (7) same as no. 5 since rinsing the mouth is also done after taking food; (8) a bath (*snāna*); (9) clothes (*bastra*); (10) ornaments (*ābharana*); (11) perfume (*gaṇḍa* made from sandal paste); (12) flowers (*puṣpa*); (13) incense (*dhūpa*); (14) lamp (*dīpa*); (15) food (*naibedya*); (16) praise (*bandana*). While the offering is in process other brahmin priests of various classes stand on the ground and hand the three main priests sitting on the platform the articles which are needed.

While the food offering is taking place in the inner sanctum, a devadasi dances in the dance hall (for a description see Chapter 6).

Offering of food destined for the public at large (bhoga maṇḍapa)

The temple is vacated of pilgrims and preparations such as purifying by washing with water are undertaken in the food hall (*bhoga maṇḍapa*), which is the first hall in the series of four chambers in the main temple; it is situated in front of (east of) the dance hall and the door leading to it is situated right behind the pillar of Garuda. During this offering no one is allowed to be in the temple between the *bhoga maṇḍapa* and the inner sanctum. As for the offering in the inner sanctum, the cooks bring the food and place the earthen pots on the ground in front of three places where *pūjā paṇḍā*-s will sit to do the offering. This offering is performed in the fivefold manner (*pañcopacāra*). The raw food for this offering has been supplied by monasteries in Puri and purchased with the money offered for that purpose by pilgrims. After it has been offered, the food is taken out by another class of brahmin temple servants. Some of the food is sent to the monasteries and some of it is brought to the market in the outer compound of the temple, in the north-east corner, where it is sold to pilgrims. No pilgrims are ever allowed inside the hall of food.

The Midday Meal (madhyama dhūpa)

This offering is carried out in the same manner as the morning meal; the food offered is of a greater variety, having some fifty different preparations; it does not include the three special preparations first brought out at the morning meal. This offering is not called 'the royal offering', an appellation given only to the morning meal. The offering of food is not accompanied by the dance of the devadasi, which is also a feature only of the morning meal. And finally, no portion of this offering is sent to the king. Apart from these aforementioned differences, the worship follows the same pattern as that of the morning meal.

Midday Nap (madhyama pahuḍa)

For the nap of the deities three cots are placed in front of the three main images and flowers are offered. The door to the inner sanctum as well as that to the dance hall are closed and sealed with a mud seal.

Opening of the doors and offering of the evening lamp (pahuḍa phitā and sandhyā āḷati)

In the late afternoon, around 5 p.m., the seals are inspected and then broken and the doors opened in the same fashion as was described for the corresponding morning ritual. The beds are removed and the lamps are offered by waving them and circling them in front of the images; this is also performed in the same manner and by the same persons as the morning lamp offering. The deities are given a change of clothes (*mailama*) and flowers.

The evening meal (sandhyā dhūpa)

This meal is offered in the same manner as the midday meal; the type of dishes cooked are different, including a staple of the Oriyas, namely rice-water flavoured with spices (*pokhāḷa*). A portion of this food is sent to the king. This is followed by the second and final public viewing in which the public is allowed inside the inner sanctum. This in turn is followed by another change of clothes (*mailama*).

Rubbing the images with sandal paste (candan lāgi)

In spite of its appellation, this rubbing or dabbing includes other perfumes as well, such as camphor and musk, among others. It is performed by the *simhāris*. The ingredients for this offering are supplied by a temple servant of the garland-maker caste (*māli*). It is brought in a procession from the house of this non-brahmin servant by three high ranking brahmin priests.

Great decorative dressing (baḍa siṃhāra beśa)

The deities are decorated with many flower ornaments such as garlands, flowered head-dress and a conical flower nose ornament. This decoration is carried out by three *simhāris*.

Evening refreshment (baḍa siṃhāra bhoga)

The *pūjā paṇḍā*-s carry out a fivefold offering including some cooked food. It is done in the same manner as previous fivefold offerings. During this offering a brahmin seated in the dance hall near the gate leading to the incense hall plays a string instrument and sings poems from the twelfth century work *Gīta Govinda*. After this offering is finished the place is purified by the sprinkling of water. It is now ready for the last ritual of the day.

The putting to sleep ceremony (pahuḍa āḷati)

Three beds are placed in front of the images on the dais as for the midday nap. The devadasi, who must be of the 'inner' class (*bhitara gāuṇī*) is there on the inner sanctum side of the inner wooden pole but not beyond the threshold of the inner sanctum. The small metal image of the 'sleeping lord' (*śayaṇa ṭhākura*) is taken out from the adjacent storeroom and brought on the dais and placed on one of the beds. This image is a representation of Arddhanārīśwara (Śiva who is half man and half woman). The priests in charge are *pūjā paṇḍās*, *simhāris* and some other brahmin servants such as the man in charge of the beds. The devadasi sings during the whole ceremony songs from the *Gīta Govinda*, among others. The image of the sleeping lord is brought to the gate leading into the dance hall; the devadasi accompanies it. There the image is placed on a stand which is shaped like the small two-headed drum of Śiva—the *damaru*; there this deity is offered flowers and lamps are waved. At that time everyone except the priests in charge and the devadasi leaves the

temple premises. The image is brought back to the inner sanctum and briefly made to touch the bed and then it is placed back in the storeroom. The devadasi and the priests leave. The doors are closed and sealed with a mud seal by a brahmin priest whose sole function this is—who corresponds to the Bhitaracu Mahāpātra of the same rite in the morning—and who is called the Talicu Mahāpātra.

The entire temple compound, inner and outer, is checked to ensure that no one remains there during the night, and the four outer gates are locked for the night.

Appendix 2
Purification of the temple

Purification of the temple is called 'great bath' (*mahāsnāna*). However that same term can also be used to refer to the deities' daily purificatory bath (*abakāśa*) which is not undertaken because of some unusual pollution but is part of the daily routine. The use of the same term for these two types of events can lead to confusion. I will now describe the purification which takes place due to some unforeseen pollution.

The purificatory actions taken are basically of two kinds depending on whether food is present either in the inner sanctum or in the food hall or not. When food is present in either of these two places then as a result of any pollution anywhere in the main temple, all the food is thrown away, including the food that might still be in the kitchen and the temple and the kitchen are purified. Such events take on catastrophic proportions since on an average day the temple cooks food for at least 5,000 persons. The financial losses involved are therefore huge. The person causing the pollution is fined by the temple administrator (and used to be fined by the king). There are therefore careful precautions taken to see to it that pollution does not occur in the temple. At the entrance gates pilgrims are carefully checked by temple guards to see that they do not carry any polluting items, such as leather and cigarettes, or whether they have any bleeding or supurating wounds, or whether they belong to a non-Hindu (excepting Jain or Buddhist) faith. Also very old persons, very pregnant women, very small infants will not be allowed in the main temple for fear that they might pollute it by dying, giving birth, or being incontinent, respectively.

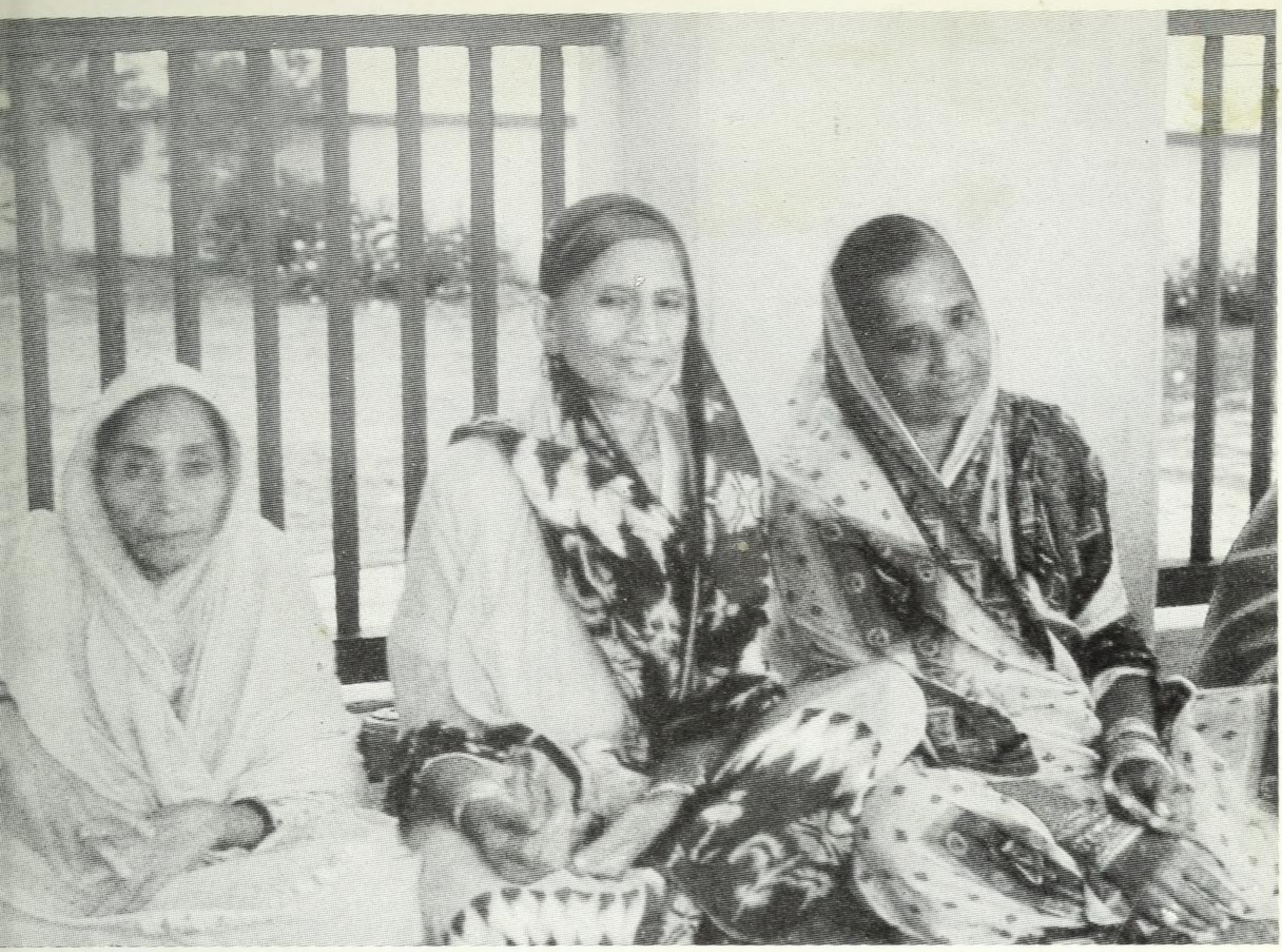
Other causes of pollution are: spitting, passing urine or defecating, smoking, touching the images, vomiting, etc. In other words, any crossing of the boundaries of the body (see Marglin 1977).

If any of these things happen while food is in the main temple, not only will the food there be destroyed, but also the food in the kitchen, as well as all the earthen pots (thousands of them), the bamboo poles and ropes by means of which the cooks carry the food to the main temple. The kitchen and the main temple are washed with water by the brahmin servants of the *padhiāri* class while the *pūjā paṇḍās* recite *mantras* in the inner sanctum and then proceed to bathe the deities, i.e. to perform once again the daily purificatory bath (*abakāśa*).

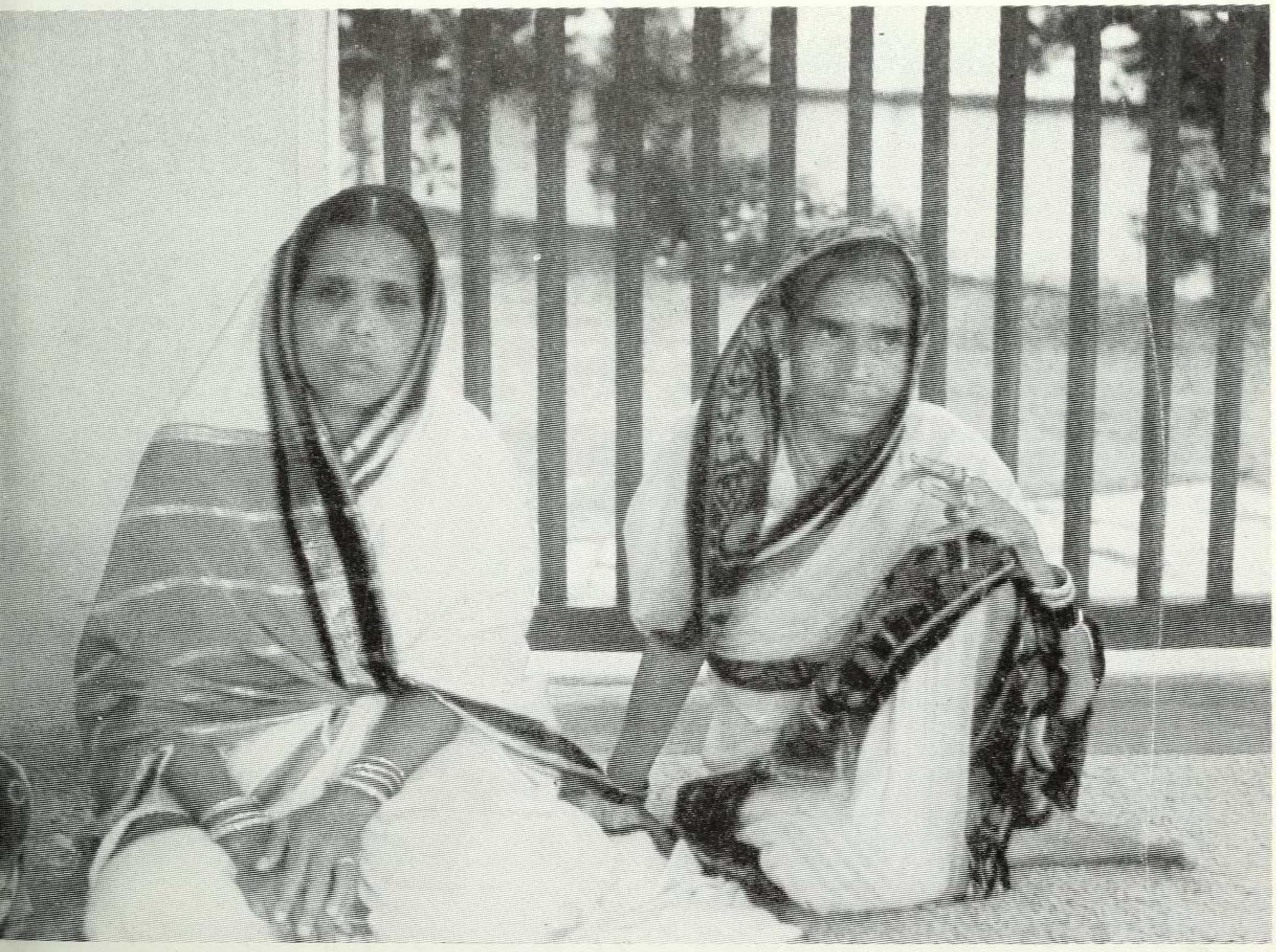
If the pollution takes place in the main audience hall, the temple from that place all the way to the inner sanctum is washed. If it takes place in the antechamber to the inner sanctum it will be washed from that place on. But if it happens in the inner sanctum, both it and the antechamber will be purified.

If a pollution occurs anywhere else within the temple compound only that particular place will be purified.

If someone pollutes anywhere in the main temple but there is no food in it, the same procedures are followed except the kitchen does not have to be purified and the food in it is, of course, not thrown away.

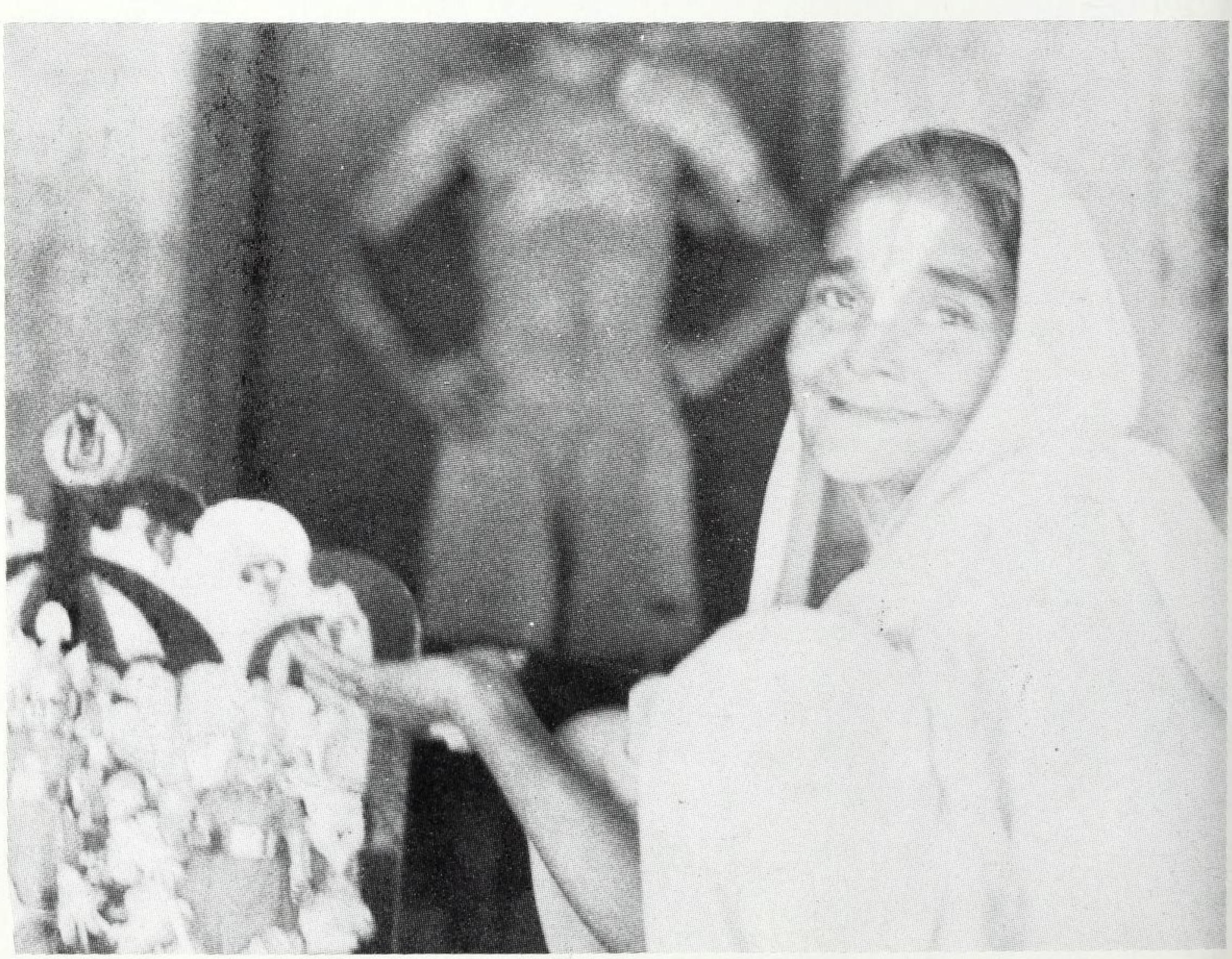


1. Three devadasis (from left): Bisaka, Amrapalli, Brundabati.

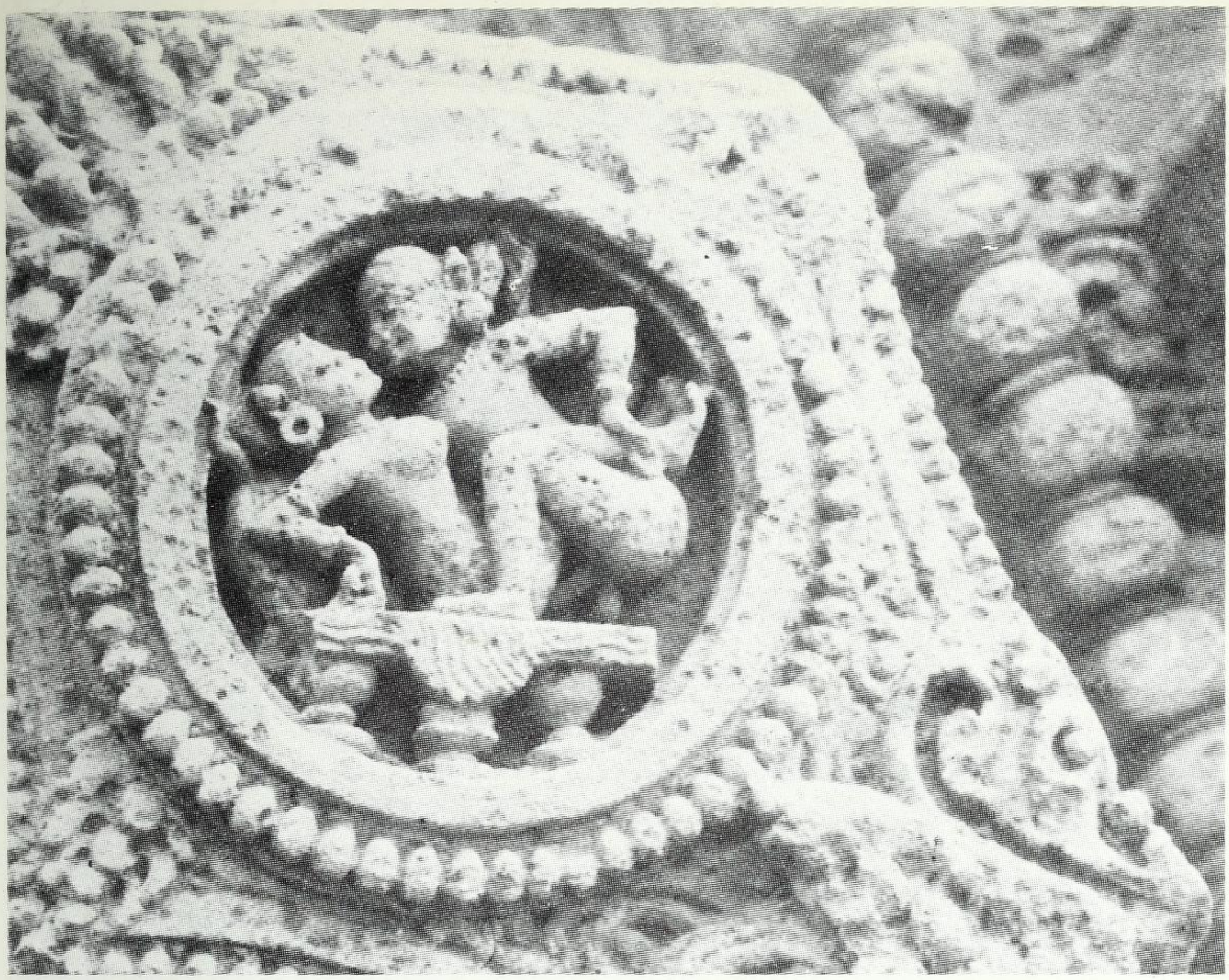


2. Two devadasis: Lalitha (left) and Radha.

3. The *dei* sitting in the courtyard of her house.



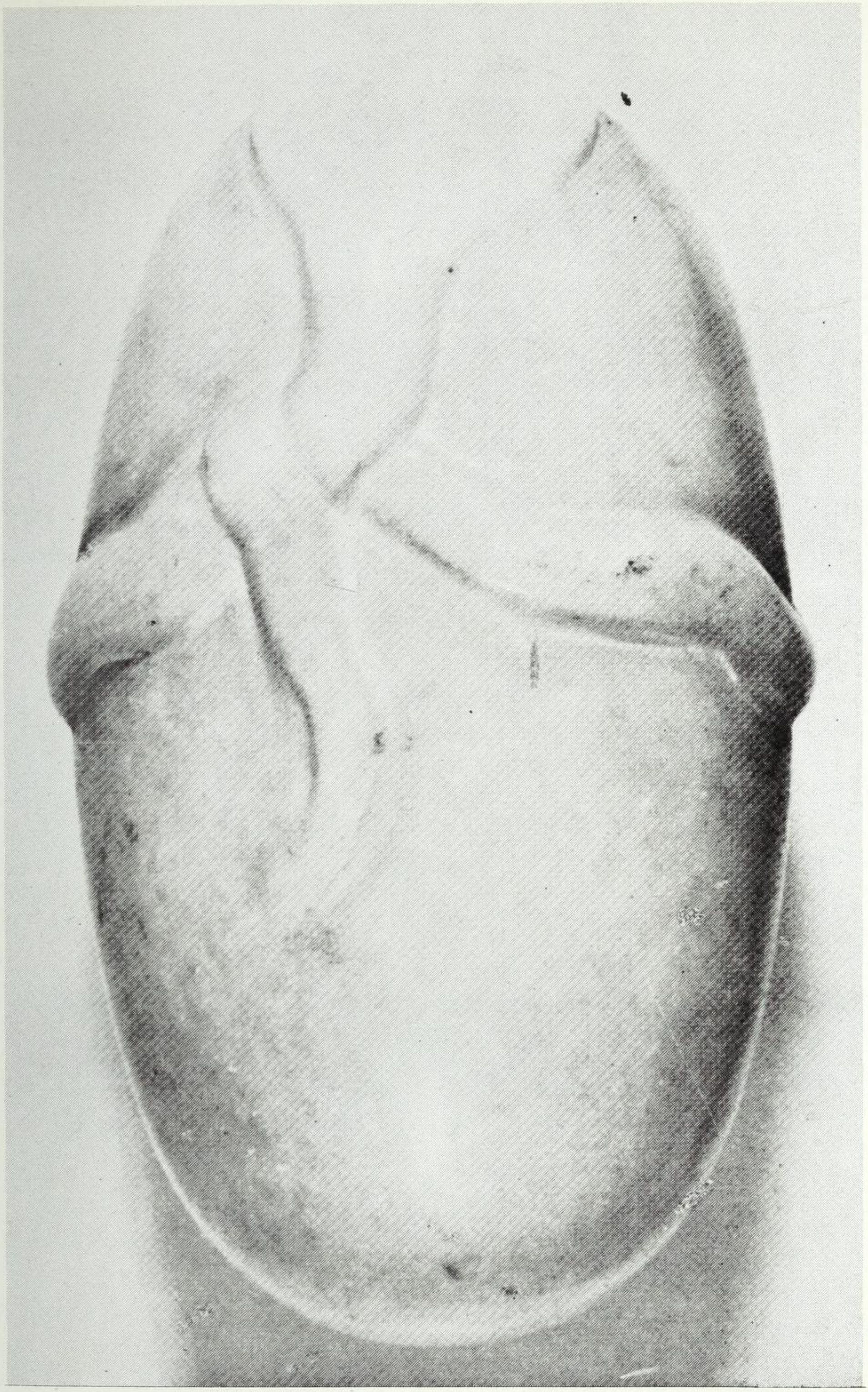
4. A Vaishnavite *pūjāriṇī*.



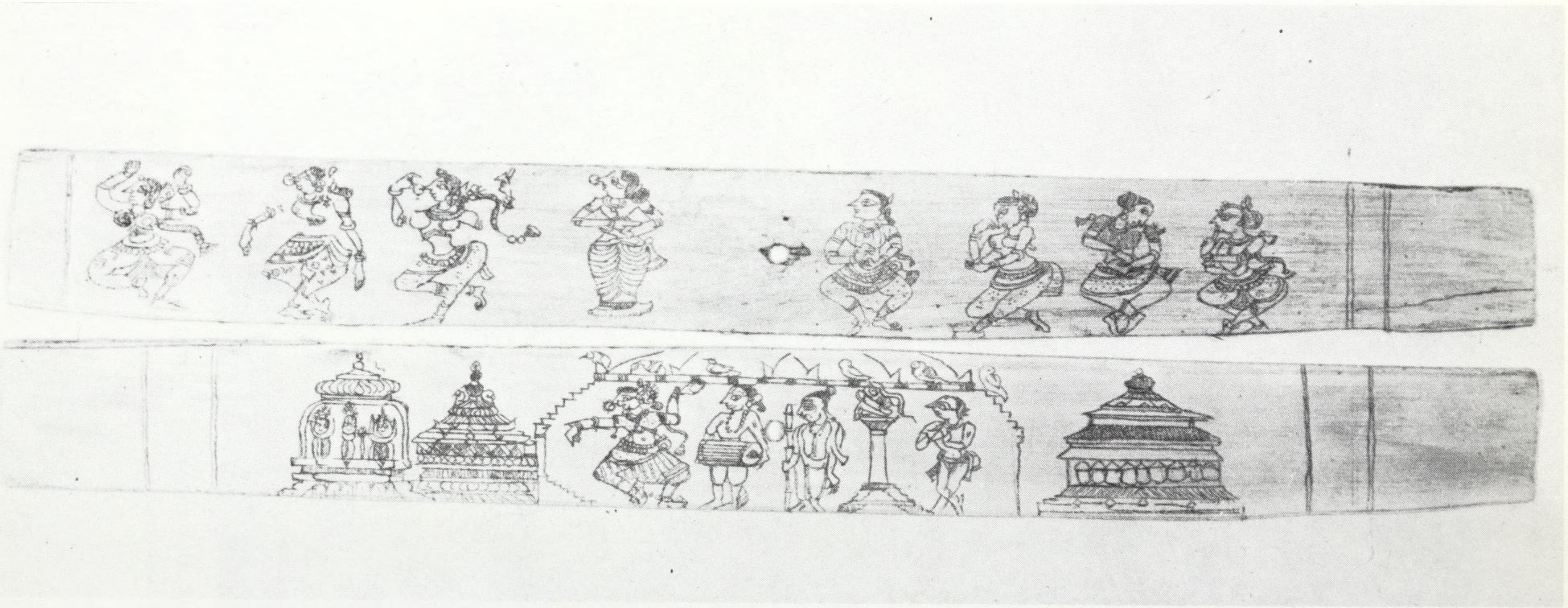
5. A *maithuna* from the temple of Konarak.

6. First in a series of illustrations to the Rāmāyaṇa, by Śrī Jagannātha Mahāpātra, illustrating the seduction of Ṛṣyaśṛnga by the courtesans.

7. Paintings around an entrance of a house in Puri.



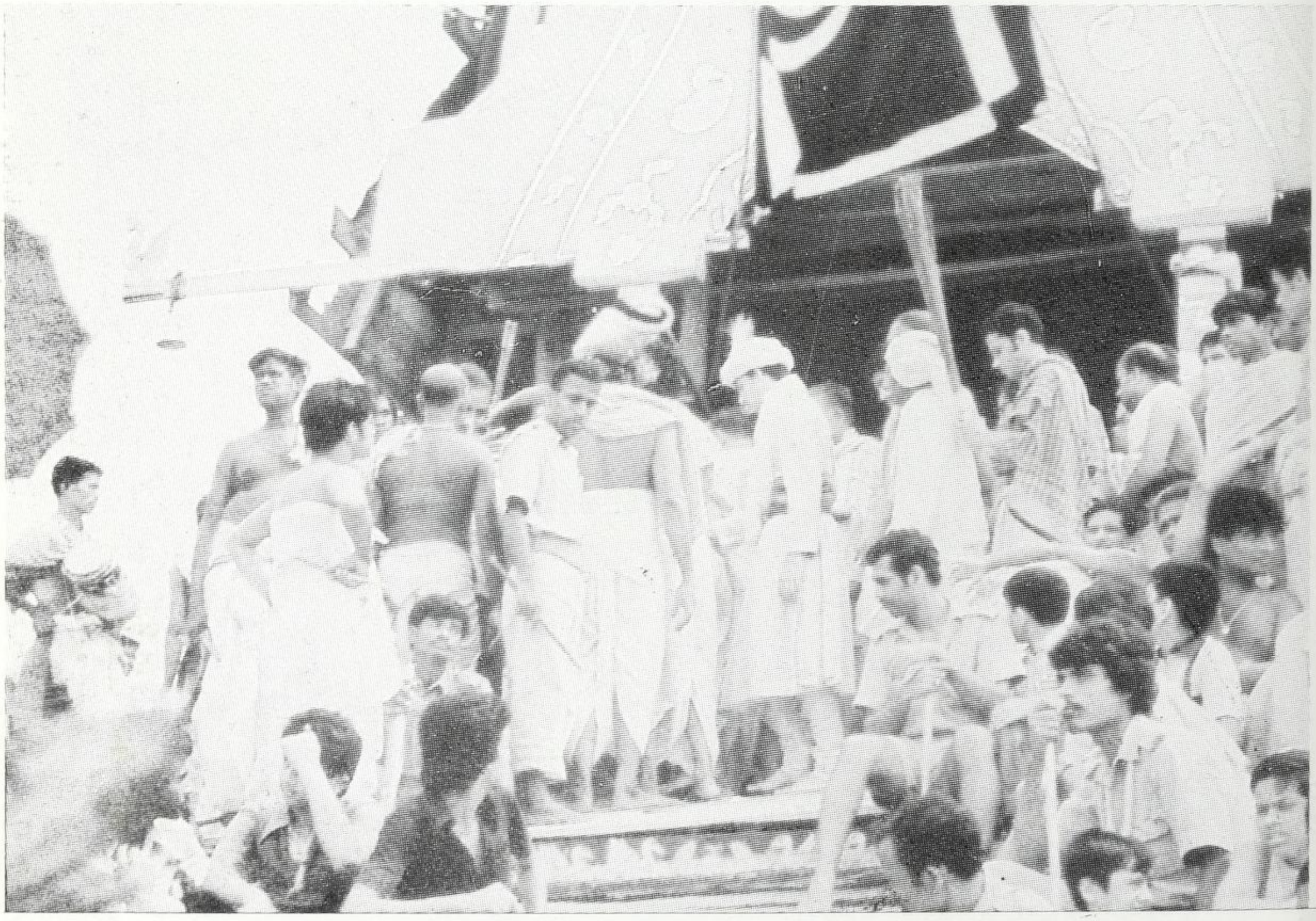
8. *Kuṇḍalinī* coiled around a *liṅgaṁ*.
(*From the collection of Ajit Mookerjee*)



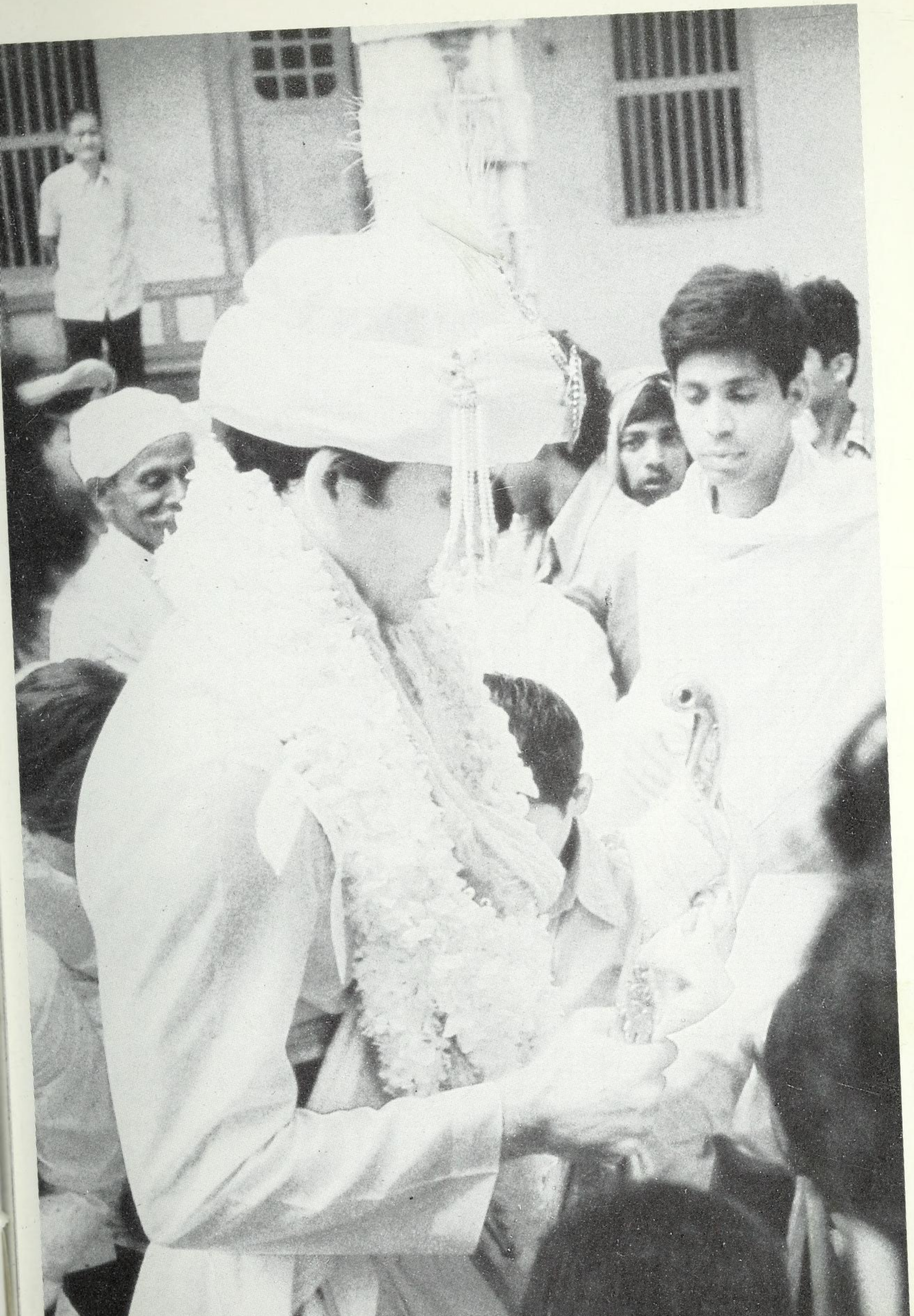
9. Illustration of dance drawn on palm leaves.

10. Designs made on a house for Lakṣmī pūjā.

11. The king, seated in a *tāmjān*, prepares to leave the palace for the ritual sweeping of the chariots.

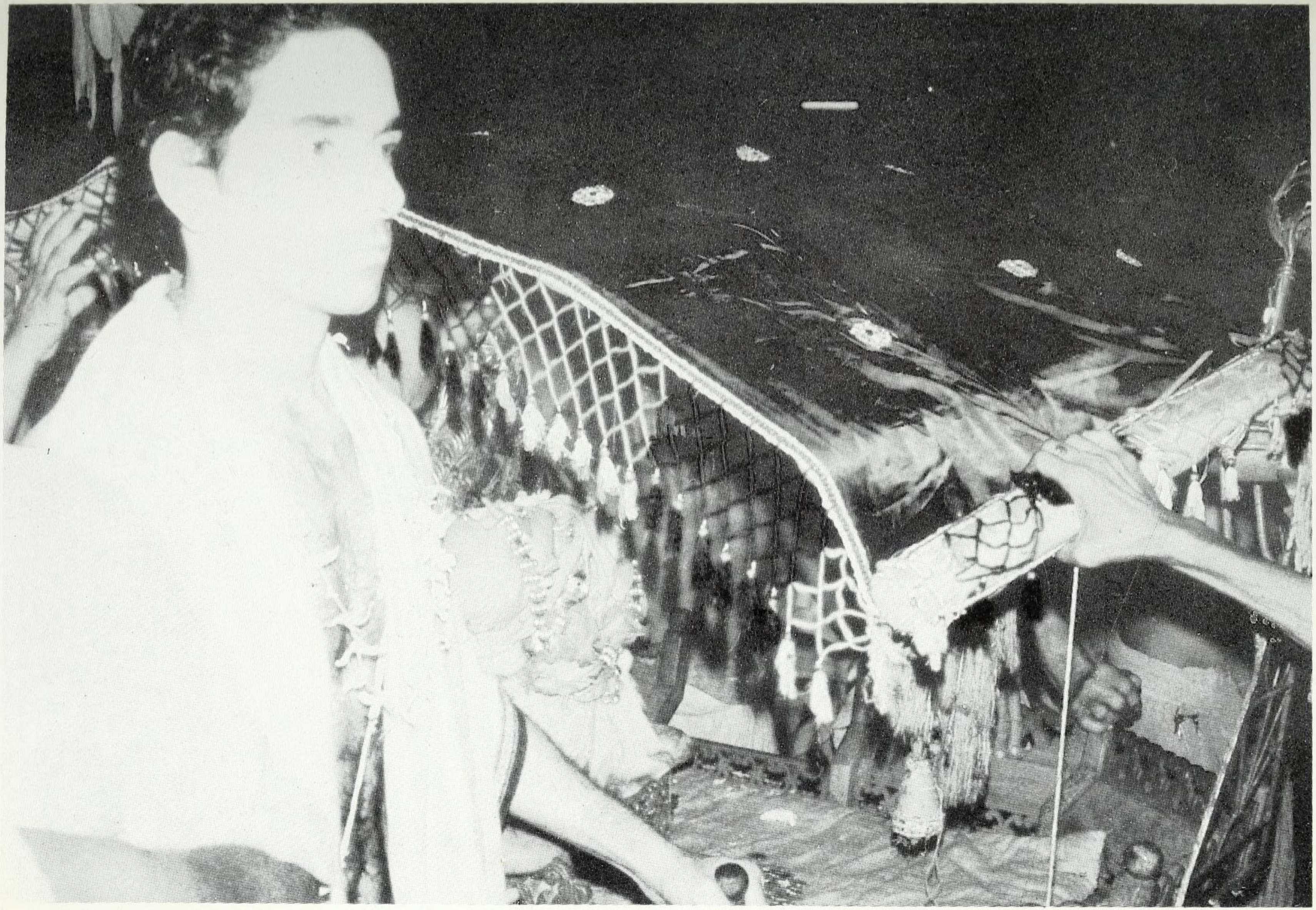


12. The king performs the ritual cleaning of the chariots.

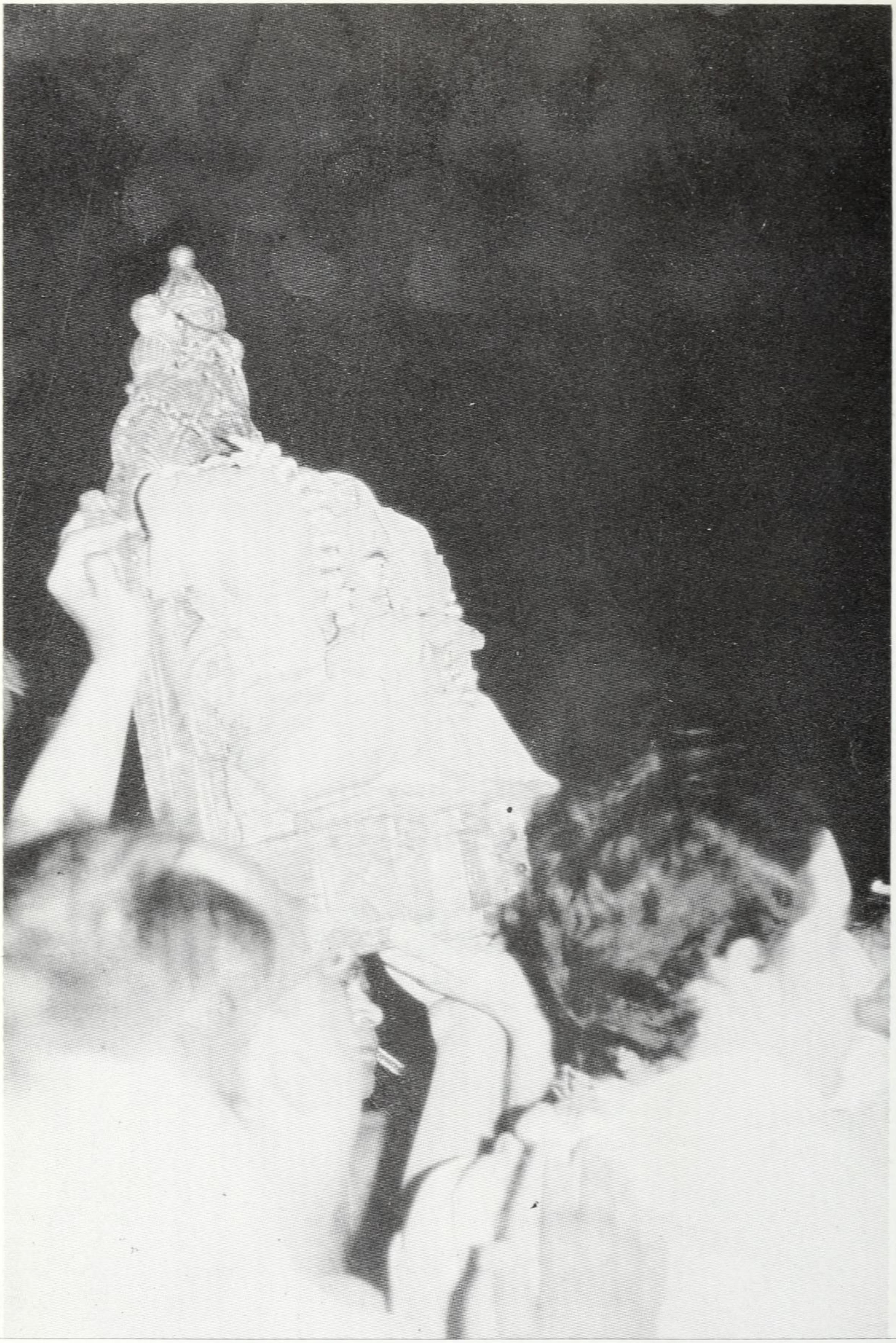


13. The king being worshipped by the people in the palace after the sweeping of the chariots.

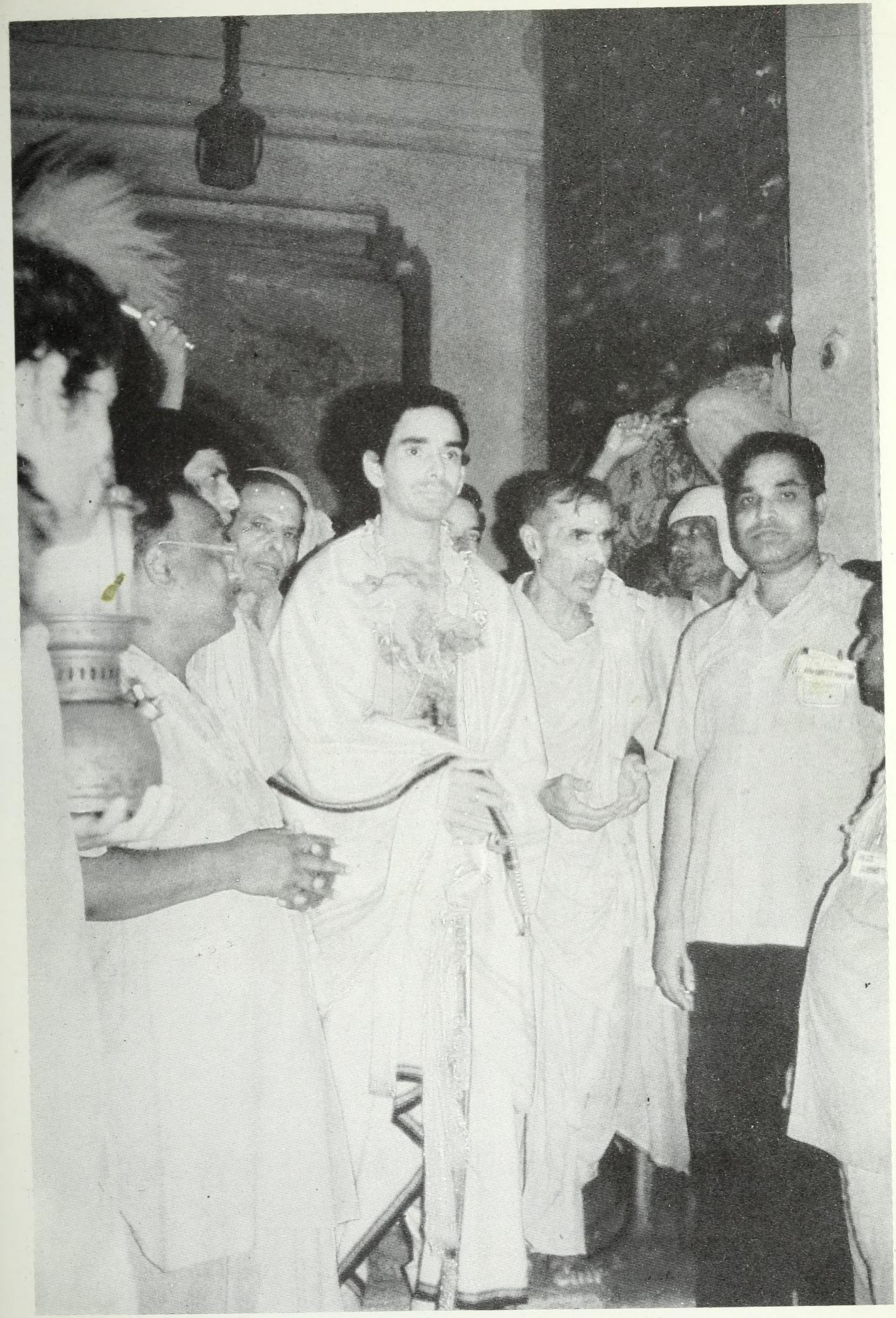
14. Baḷabhadra's chariot being pulled (viewed from the roof of the palace).



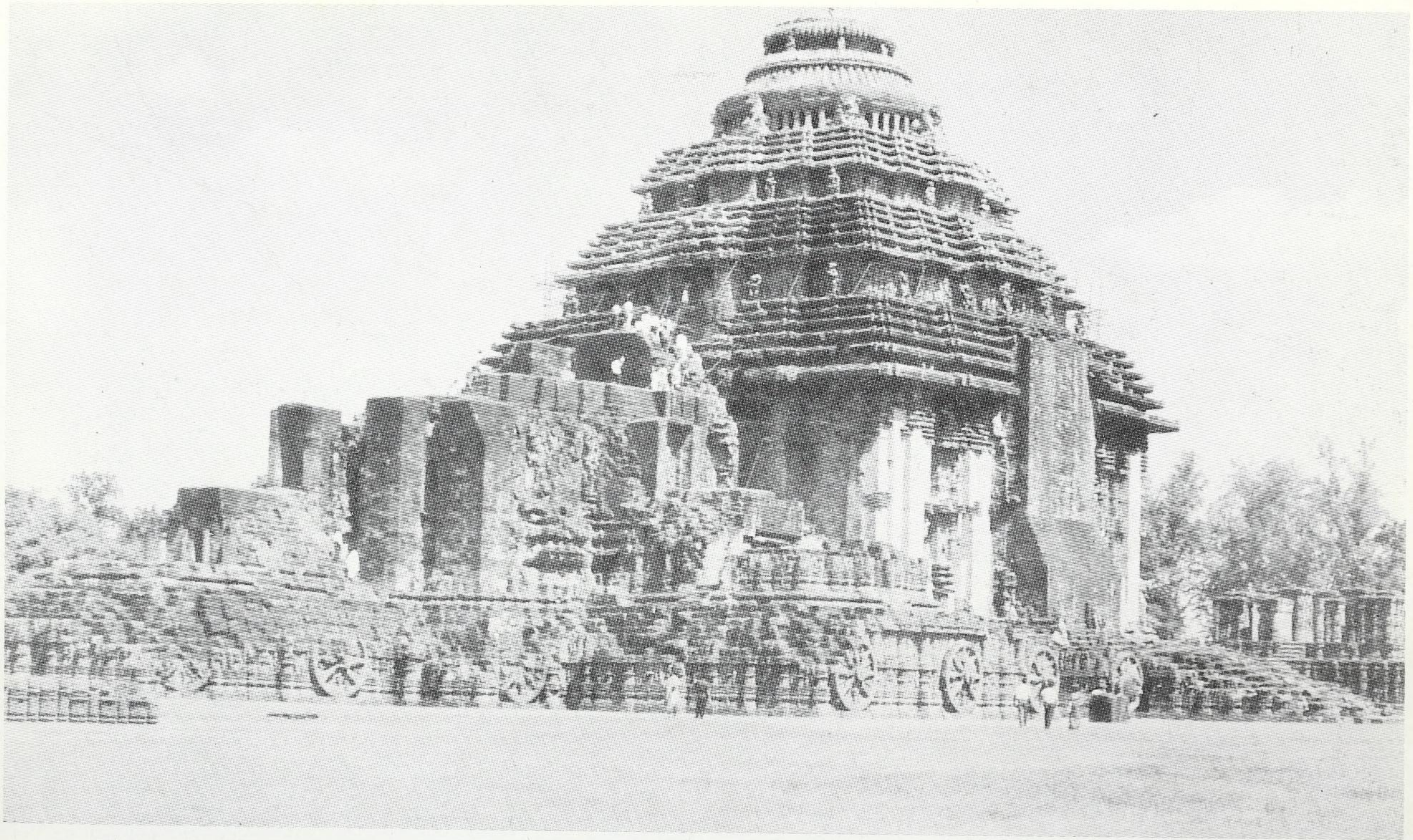
15. During Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa *bheṭa* the king brings the image of goddess Lakṣmī to Jagannātha's chariot.



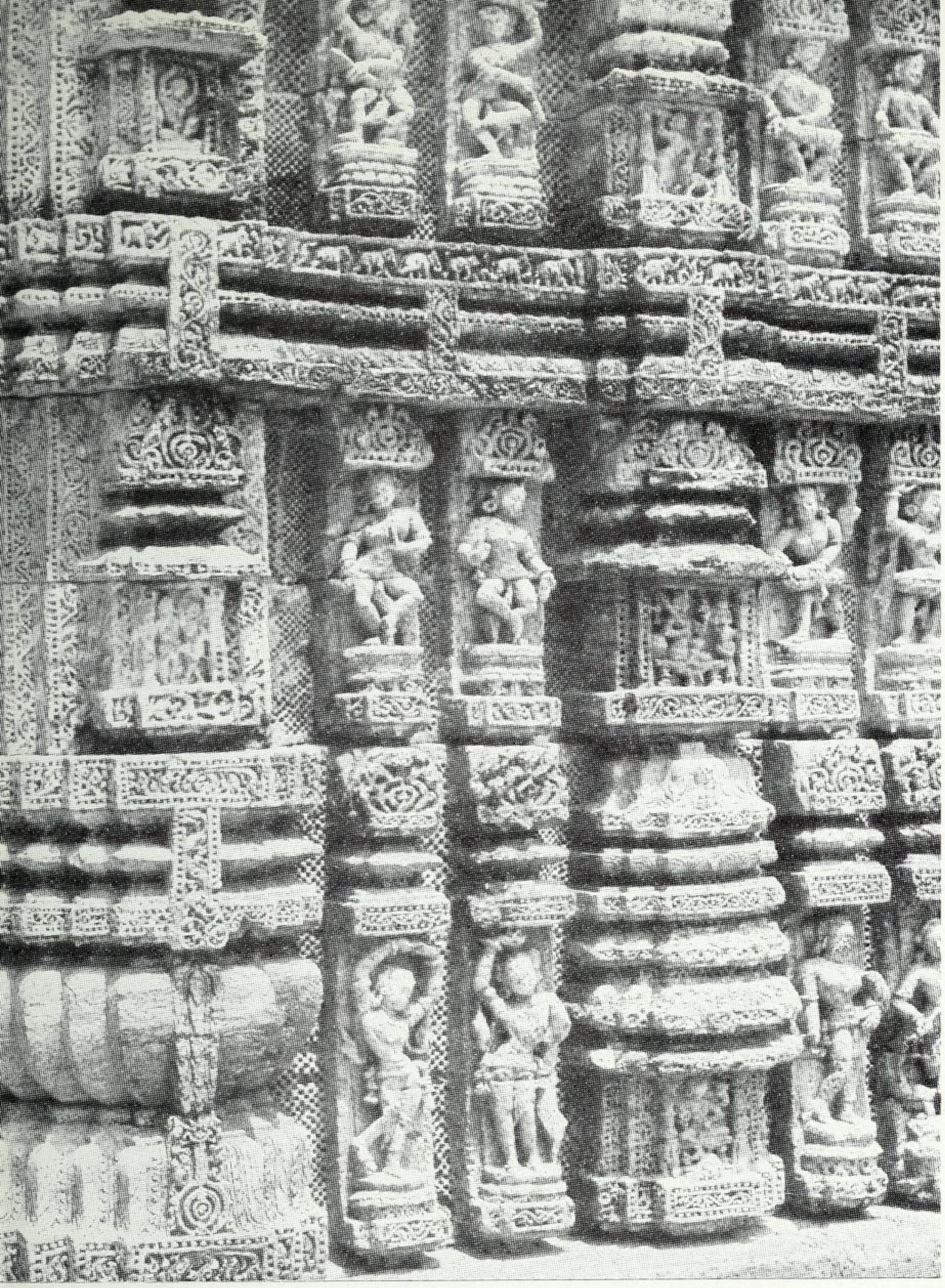
16. The king lifts the image of goddess Laksmī.



17. After Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa *bheṭa* the king gives *darśan* flanked by the two *rājagurus*.

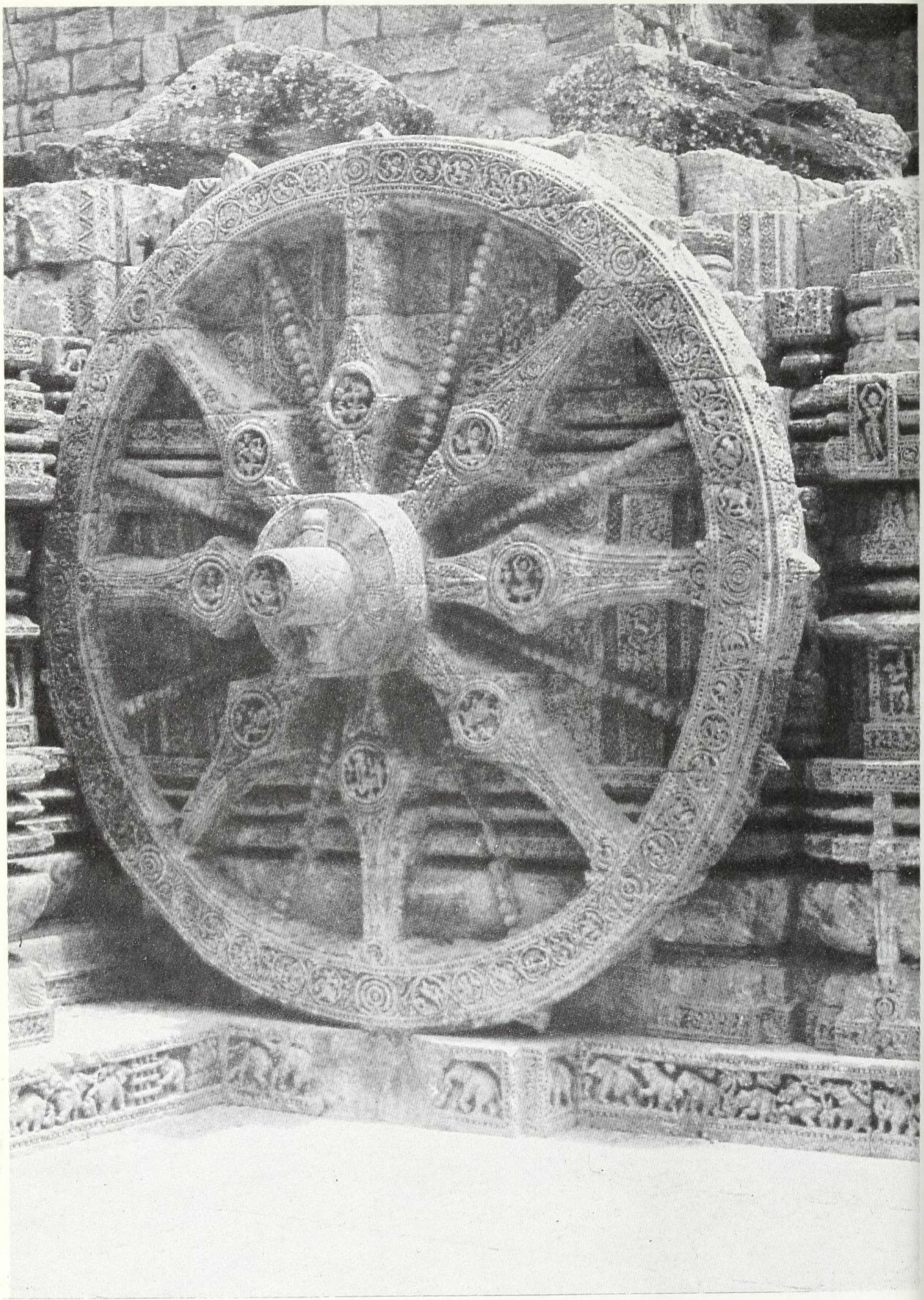


18. The temple of Konarak.



19. Konarak: close-up view of the dance hall.

20. Konarak: detail of dancer on the *naṭa-maṇḍira*.



21. Konarak: a wheel of the Sun Chariot.

Part III

TIME: AUSPICIOUSNESS AND INAUSPICIOUSNESS

CHAPTER 7

Time Transcended

In the practices of the devadasis reviewed so far, the themes of life maintenance, abundance, lack of hierarchy, and sovereignty have predominated. The practices to be discussed in the next three chapters are all concerned with the idea of time. The notions of auspiciousness and inauspiciousness are inextricably linked to various ideas about time. This relationship between time, auspiciousness, and inauspiciousness is known from the almanacs published throughout India by astrologers, called *pañcanga* in the north and *pañji* in Orissa. They are very popular, in part because they indicate the auspicious and inauspicious times of the month and year.

This chapter examines two rituals of the devadasis and several associated myths. These are the evening ritual in the temple and the festival of Nandośaba, celebrating the first feeding of the infant Krishna. Some of the themes already discussed will again be apparent; the focus of my interpretation, however, is shifted to the conceptualizations of time.

The evening ritual in the temple is still carried out today. Only devadasis of the inner division can perform it. Out of the four devadasis belonging to this class, namely Brundabati, Lalita, Bhanumati and Devaki, only Brundabati continues the tradition. Lalita has ceased all activities related to her tradition because of 'shame'; her friend Bhanumati has become a full-time nurse, and Devaki is too old. Not being able to enter in the temple, I could unfortunately not personally observe this ritual. P. C. Mishra and my assistant Puspita Mohanty went for me and brought back detailed eyewitness accounts which were supplemented by the descriptions of the devadasis, Sahasrakhyi and other *paṇḍās*.

The last ritual of the day, before the temple doors are closed for the night, is called *pahuḍa āḷati*. The term *pahuḍa* is a special term used only to refer to the deities' or the king's sleep. The term *āḷati* means the waving of lights in front of the image. At that time three wooden

decorated beds are taken out of the storeroom and placed in front of the images of the three main deities on the dais in the inner sanctum. The brahmin temple servants in charge of this duty are called *pāta seja mekāpa* (*pāta* are silk cloths, covering the beds, and *seja* means bed). A small portable metallic image of a deity called the Lord of Sleep (*śayana ṭhākura*, or sleeping lord) is also taken out of the storeroom and placed on one of the beds in front of the dais. At that time the devadasi, standing at the entrance to the inner sanctum beyond the wooden pole which keeps the public out of the inner sanctum, begins to sing songs. These songs are Oriya devotional songs and songs from the 12th-century Sanskrit poem *Gīta Govinda*.[1] The *Gīta Govinda* sings of the love between Krishna and his favourite among the milkmaids of Brundāban, Rādhā. This poem is classified as an 'erotic poem' (*srungāra kāvya*). The three main deities are at that time wearing the '*srungāra beśa*', the erotic dress; the evening ritual is part of a larger sequence of ritual activities which together are called '*baḍa srungāra*' (great erotic [dress]). *Baḍa srungāra* starts after the evening meal; it consists of decorating the deities with many different kinds of flower ornaments.

While the devadasi is singing—she does not dance at this time—the image of the Lord of Sleep is taken by two brahmins and brought to the gate leading into the dance hall. The icon of the Lord of Sleep is that of *ardhanārīśwara*, Śiva half man, half woman. At the gate to the dance hall (called *jaya bijaya duāra*) this image is placed on a wooden stand which is shaped like the double-headed drum of Śiva, called the *damaru*.[2] The brahmin priests offer flowers and lights to the image and all the while the devadasi continues to sing. During the whole ritual the lights in the temple are gradually extinguished. The image is then taken back to the storeroom, everyone leaves the temple, and the doors are closed and sealed for the night.

In this ritual both vaishnavite and śaivite elements coexist. I recorded three types of interpretation: a popular interpretation, a vaishnavite interpretation, and a *śākta* interpretation. All three interpret this ritual as representing or alluding to sexual union. They differ on the cast of characters as well as on their richness. The popular and the *śākta* interpretations are very brief whereas the vaishnavite interpretation is extremely full and rich.

The popular interpretation was given to me by some of the devadasis themselves as well as by some male temple servants. According to this view, the evening ritual of the devadasi represents the 'happy'

union of Lord Jagannātha with his consort Lakṣmī. At the end of the day the Lord goes to bed and unites with his wife. The devadasi is either seen as being the earthly representation of Lakṣmī or she is thought of as a female attendant whose erotic songs, performed in the presence of the divine couple, sets the mood for that couple's subsequent sexual activity.

The devadasis of the inner division can start performing this ritual only after puberty. Before puberty but after their consecration to temple service, all devadasis, both of the outer and inner divisions, start performing the dance ritual at the morning meal. After puberty, the devadasis of the inner division start performing the evening ritual, which is their particular duty; they can continue performing the dance ritual, but the devadasis of the outer division cannot perform the evening ritual.

The prohibition on performing this ritual pre-pubertally makes it clear that the woman has to be sexually mature before she can participate in it, since a girl married pre-pubertally will consummate her marriage only after puberty.

The *śākta* interpretation has very little to say about this ritual. None of the devadasis claimed to be *śāktas*; among the nine devadasis only Amrapalli claimed a sectarian affiliation. The other devadasis, as well as a majority of the male temple servants with whom I talked, had an unquestioning, unsophisticated approach to their ritual activities and were generally unable to give extensive interpretations of their rituals.

The *rājagurus* of Puri were my informants on the *śākta* tradition. In that tradition, the evening ritual represents the union of Lord Jagannātha, conceived of as Bhairaba, the terrible aspect of Śiva, and Bhairabī, the terrible aspect of the goddess. The devadasi is then Bhairabī. The ritual is not a part of an offering (*pūjāra anga nuhē*) like the morning dance. It simply represents the sexual union of Bhairaba and Bhairabī, whereas at the time of the morning meal offering, Jagannātha is considered to be Kāḷī and the dance of the devadasi is termed *Kāḷī* or *Śakti ucchiṣṭa*, i.e. the 'leavings' of goddess Kāḷī or Śakti. The word *ucchiṣṭa* is the Sanskrit equivalent of the Oriya word *oiṇṭhā*, which refers to the food left after one has eaten. The food which has been offered to the deities, *mahāpraśād*, is also sometimes referred to as *ucchiṣṭa*. This is done when explaining to someone that the food which has been offered to the deities is considered to be the leavings of those deities. Thus the dance is considered by the *śāktas* to

be part of a larger sequence of offerings called a *pūjā* and to represent the leavings of the goddess. The *śāktas* thus make an explicit connection between the dance of the devadasi and food, a connection which—as I have pointed out—is implicit in the timing and the spatial arrangement of that ritual. The evening ritual of the devadasi, in contrast, is not conceived of as an offering but as representing sexual union which is called a *samyoga*, literally a 'yoking together'.

Amrapalli was my principal informant on the vaishnavite interpretation of the evening ritual. In Amrapalli's vaishnavite perspective, both the dance and the evening ritual are included in the same interpretive framework. Both are part of a reenactment of the *līlā*, the divine play of Krishna in Brundāban, the village inhabited by cowherds, situated on the banks of the river Jamuna. It is remarkable that none of the devadasis—not even Amrapalli—saw themselves as playing the role of Rādhā since the *Gīta Govinda* gives her pride of place. The devadasis think of themselves during the evening ritual as *gopīs*, the cow-maiden of Brundāban. In spite of the inclusion of *Gīta Govinda* in their repertoire of songs, the devadasis' lack of emphasis on Rādhā reveals their reliance on the Oriya Bhāgavata written in the sixteenth century by Jagannātha Dāsa.[3] In this version, all the *gopīs* took part and not only one specifically favoured *gopī*. The setting of this divine play is the forest on the bank of the river Jamuna, outside of the village of Brundāban, at night, under the light of the full autumn moon. To this sylvan setting, the sound of Krishna's flute has irresistibly drawn the milkmaids of Brundāban. There Krishna who, through his power of illusion multiplies himself, dances, and sings with the *gopīs*. 'As the *gopīs*, in dancing and singing in Brundāban, gave joy (*sukha*) to Krishna, here in Jagannātha's temple we give joy to Jagannātha through dancing and singing.' These words from Amrapalli succinctly capture the vaishnavite's understanding of the rituals of the devadasis.

However, this only defines the setting of the ritual which remains to be interpreted. To make me understand the *gopī bhāba* (the feeling or emotion of the milkmaids, Skt. *bhāva*) Amrapalli first contrasted this emotion to that existing between a husband and a wife. When Krishna left Brundāban and went to the city of Dwārikā, he married eight queens. The *bhāba* of these queens is that of *swakiyā*, i.e. who belongs to one. By marriage these queens belong to Krishna, they are his own wives by right, whereas the *gopīs* are not married to Krishna; in fact the *gopīs* are married to cowherd men in the village of

Brundāban. Thus the *gopīs* have *parakiyā bhāba*: the emotion pertaining to a relationship in which there is no ownership, no marriage. The love between Krishna and the *gopīs* is called *corā priti*: stolen love. The *gopīs* lovingly tease Krishna and familiarly call him *tu cora*: 'you thief'. Krishna has stolen the love of the *gopīs*, and it is in that stolen love that the greatest, most self-abandoned surrendering to Krishna can occur. In the *swakiyā bhāba* such as that experienced by Krishna's eight queens, there is always an element of ego feeling (*ahankāra*). The queens say 'I have a husband' and the element of ownership and of ego-feeling is inherent in such a statement. Krishna does not belong to any one *gopī* exclusively; his erotic dalliance is generously lavished on many women. To illustrate and explain further the difference between the *swakiyā* and the *parakiyā* relationship and the attitudes pertaining to these, Amrapalli told me the following story:

The sage Nārada not only did not understand this *parakiyā bhāba* but he hated it as well. So Krishna decided to enlighten the sage. He caused himself to have a very high fever. Nārada at the sight of Krishna's illness was exceedingly grieved and immediately wanted to call all the doctors. Krishna told him that that would be useless and the only cure for his fever would be for Nārada to bring him back the dust from the feet of some women. Nārada immediately embarked on a search for such a cure. He first went to the inner apartment of the eight wives of Krishna and said: 'Oh eight queens, my Lord and your husband is suffering from a high fever and the only cure for this ailment is the dust from your feet.' The queens answered: 'How can we possibly do such a thing? He is the master (*pati*), if we do this we will surely go to hell (*nāraka*); it would be a sin (*pāpa*).' And so they refused. Nārada then left and sought out many women but none would agree to giving the dust from their feet. They all argued as follows: 'Krishna is Brahman; he is the highest; it would be a sin to give dust from our feet.' So Nārada in sorrow returned empty handed. Krishna asked him if he had gone everywhere. Nārada said he had gone everywhere except to Brundāban. Krishna sent him there. When the *gopīs* saw Nārada approaching they recognized him and realized he must be bringing news from Krishna. They playfully ran towards him asking him for news of Krishna. Nārada said that Krishna was very sick and that he needed the dust from the feet of women. All the *gopīs* immediately took the dust from their feet and put it in a cloth for Nārada. Nārada queried: 'Oh *gopīs*, you know that Krishna is the highest; don't you feel it is a sin (*pāpa*) to do this? The *gopīs* answered: 'Oh Nārada, whatever he is we do not know; what we know is that he is one of our village, our playmate. If he is suffering, whatever is needed we will do. If it is a sin we will go to hell (*nāraka*), we are ready for that. He is everything to us.' On his way back to Dwārikā where Krishna was, Nārada understood.

The story deals principally with hierarchy. Taking the dust from someone's feet is an expression of the high position of the person from whom the dust is taken and the low position of the person taking that dust. The lowliest portion of the higher person's body—the feet—is worthy of the highest portion of the lower person's body—the head. The dust is taken by the hand and placed on the forehead of the person taking the dust. For the wives of Krishna to give dust from their feet to him would be an infraction of the rules of hierarchy; it would be an action going against the grain, a *pratiloma* type of behaviour. Such behaviour threatens the very order of the society and brings on worldly and/or other worldly sanction.[4] The *gopīs'* code of conduct is not according to the rules of hierarchy but disregards these rules; for them these considerations are irrelevant. They know they might go to hell but such a punishment is not what looms large in their concern. Their only concern is the welfare of Krishna and their actions are solely prompted by love. Marriage, in other words, belongs to the realm of hierarchy and the rules pertaining to it of *pratiloma* and *anuloma*. The *gopīs'* behaviour of violating the proper hierarchical modes of relating parallels the characterization of Krishna's behaviour as that of a thief. Krishna as a thief of love violates the proper conjugal modes of relating. The conjugal mode of relating involves ownership—a man has, owns, a wife; a wife has, owns, a husband—as well as hierarchy; the woman is subordinate, lower than the husband. The word used by Amrapalli to describe that realm is *aiśwarjya*. This is the Oriya equivalent of the Sanskrit word *aiśvaryam* which Hiltebeitel translates as 'sovereignty'. The word is applied to the city of Dwārikā as well where Krishna lives with his eight wives. It is contrasted to the realm and the behaviour pertaining to Brundāban where the cowherds and the cowmaids live and where the divine play (*līlā*) of Krishna takes place. This realm is characterized by the word *mādhurjya*, sweetness (the root *madhu* means honey). In this realm Krishna is not the supreme Lord of the universe but the mischievous child and the thief of love. There people relate to him not in terms of hierarchy but in terms of simple love. To illustrate this Amrapalli told me that when a messenger came to Brundāban from Dwārikā with news of Krishna and went straight to Yaśodā, Krishna's foster mother, he found her in tears. The messenger said to her: 'Don't cry, he is the *parambrahman* (highest god); rather meditate upon him and thus secure liberation (*mokṣa*).' Yaśodā replied: 'Don't tell me he is *yogeśwara* (Lord of Yoga), he is my son, Mādhava; you

should rather tell me to run and take him in my lap. Don't talk to me about *parambrahman*; he is just my son.' Yaśodā is unconcerned with the status of Krishna as well as with personal reward, in the same way that the *gopīs* were unconcerned with the possibility of other-worldly punishment for their behaviour. Actions in the world of *mādhurjya* are not prompted by their possible consequences but by immediate sentiments of simple, spontaneous, gratuitous love. Stories illustrating the disregard for hierarchically minded behaviour abound and are told with evident delight and freshness. I will confine myself to two more examples given by Amrapalli. While in Brundāban, Krishna as a young boy used to play with young cowherds (*gopās*). In their games the loser would have to carry the others on his shoulders and Krishna, when defeated at the game, carried his playmates on his shoulders. The same sort of body symbolism of hierarchy is involved here as in the story of the dust from the *gopīs*' feet and the same type of infraction of hierarchy is involved. Similarly the food symbolism of hierarchy is also violated. While Krishna and his friends played in the forest, they would pick fruits and nuts, taste them first to ascertain if they were ripe, and then give them to him. Such food in the realm of 'sovereignty' is considered highly polluted; it is defiled by the saliva of the taster and is called leavings (*oinṭhā*). Such behaviour characterizes the realm of *mādhurjya* and it flies in the face of what is right and proper in the other realm, that of 'sovereignty' (*aiśwarjya*).

The theme of time emerges in Amrapalli's interpretation of *parakiyā* love. In this love, the stolen love between Krishna and the *gopīs*, there is no *kāma*. That word can be translated as 'erotic desire', or 'lust'. When I was first told about the absence of *kāma* in the erotic play of Krishna, I was surprised and it took many long discussions for me to understand the meaning of this assertion. By lack of *kāma* Amrapalli clearly did not mean lack of sensual pleasure or erotic behaviour. The *Gīta Govinda*, for example, is a very erotic poem. The lack of *kāma* has nothing to do with chaste, platonic love between the *gopīs* and Krishna, who fondle, caress and embrace each other with abandon and who show all the signs of sensual pleasure. It very specifically refers to the fact that in his love-making Krishna does not ejaculate. One of the names of Krishna is *achyuta*, which means the 'unfallen'. According to Amrapalli the exact meaning of this name is 'the one whose seed does not fall'. Such an interpretation is also found in the Oriya Bhāgavata by Jagannātha Dās (10:34) where the following two lines are found: 'Never does his juice

(essence) fall, that is why his name is *achyuta*' (*jāhāra nahī rasa chyuta/teṇu tā nāmaṭi achyuta*).[5]

What is the meaning of Krishna's retention of his seed? Well there are many levels of meaning. First, there is the meaning derived from everyday experience in which sexual pleasure is a momentary experience. After reaching orgasm the pleasurable erotic tension is gone and in such a manner one only attains temporary pleasure or happiness (*khyaṇika sukha*). Furthermore, by ejaculating one loses one's strength and becomes old. In this world, the world of *saṃsāra*, pleasure is brief and one begets children. Whereas in the divine play of Krishna there is continuous or eternal (*nitya*) pleasure; there are also no children. The *gopīs* are not impregnated. The wheel of birth and death and rebirth is kept turning by *kāma* in this world. Amrapalli illustrated this by reciting the following Sanskrit line: 'Again birth; again death; again sleep in the womb of the mother' (*punarapi janamam; punarapi maranam; punarapi jananī jathare śayanam*). The continuity of pleasure is opposed to the discontinuity of birth and death. Futhermore, the opposition between the realm of 'sovereignty' and the realm of 'sweetness' is also expressed in this opposition between the sexual love which entails relinquishing the seed (*kāma*) and that other love (*prema*). *Kāma* exists between husband and wife and results in procreation. *Prema*, by contrast, is a word which is used to talk of the love between Yaśodā and Krishna as well as that between Krishna and his cowherd friends. It is not restricted to erotic types of relationships such as that between the adolescent Krishna and the cowmaids. *Prema* is the reigning emotion in the realm of *mādhurjya* whereas *kāma* (desire, lust) belongs to the realm of *aiśwarjya*. My initial difficulty in understanding the absence of *kāma* in the erotic play between Krishna and the *gopīs* came from my implicit acceptance of the dichotomy asceticism/eroticism, in which asceticism is understood as the absolute opposite of eroticism, a behaviour totally devoid of sexuality. Such a dichotomy does not apply in the case of the divine play of Krishna; trying to fit the facts of the Krishna *līlā* into such a scheme simply obscures what is going on. It would be more appropriate to think in terms of a dichotomy within the field of eroticism between a type of sexuality which is discontinuous and engages one in time and the wheel of birth and rebirth (*kāma*) and a different type of sexual activity which is continuous and out of time (*nitya*). Krishna's retention of his seed can hardly be termed asceticism; such a characterization would do violence to

Krishna's supremely sensuous behaviour and to the whole tone of the *rāsa līlā*, not to speak of the *Gīta Govinda*. The crucial element in the absence of *kāma* in the realm of *mādhurjya* is that there is no consequences to the actions of the inhabitants of that realm. The shedding of the seed (*bīrjya*) has ulterior consequences, i.e. a birth. Krishna's erotic dalliance with the *gopīs* has no ulterior purpose or consequence. It exists out of time. Similarly Yaśodā's desire to run and take Krishna in her lap and her unconcern for the future reward of liberation (*mokṣa*) if she stifled that urge and meditated on Krishna as the supreme being can be viewed in the same light as Krishna's retention of his seed. The *gopīs*' unconcern with the possibility that they would go to hell for violating the rules of hierarchy by giving dust from their feet, illustrates the same unconcern for consequences. The *gopīs* act not in terms of the future but for the action itself, as if it were timeless.

The overriding opposition within which all other dichotomies are encompassed is that between sovereignty (*aiśwarjya*) and sweetness (*mādhurjya*). To the realm of 'sovereignty' belong the following: hierarchy; sexual love with shedding of the seed (*kāma*); time; marriage (*swakiyā*); rightful ownership (*adhikāra*); concern with the consequences and/or reward or sanction of one's actions. To the realm of 'sweetness' belong the following: disregard of hierarchy; love which when it is sexual does not involve the shedding of the seed (*prema*); man-woman relationship outside marriage (*parakiyā*); thievery (*cora*); unconcern with the consequences of one's actions, a doing for doing's sake; timelessness.

Since I have argued that sovereignty is closely associated with the notion of auspiciousness, does an opposition between the realm of sovereignty and the realm of sweetness entail an association between the latter and inauspiciousness? What is the relationship between 'sweetness' and auspiciousness or inauspiciousness?

As we have seen, auspiciousness is inextricably tied to fertility. In the realm of 'sweetness' there is no procreation. In Oriya (as well as in Sanskrit) the word for 'season' (*rutu*) is the same as one of the words for menstrual period. We have already seen that menarche is an auspicious ceremony and that a woman who does not menstruate is inauspicious. The fertility of women and the fertility of the earth are closely connected. The seasons which determine the agricultural cycle are also seen to be involved with the menstrual cycle of women, since the latter parallels the lunar cycle.[6]

This association between auspiciousness and time is also expressed by the fact that auspicious symbols such as the 'full vessel' and the devadasis are associated with doors, or gates. A door is an entrance, a point of passage, of movement. One does not dwell in a door, one crosses a door, one passes through a door. Fittingly, devadasis mark the passage of time by their presence in the auspicious life-cycle ceremonies.

In the temple of Jagannātha the very first thing that happens after the doors have been opened in the morning is the worship of the sun in the south-east corner of the inner compound. This is followed by the worship of the 'guardians of the gates' (*duārapālas*) such as Ganga, Yamuna and the nine planets (*nabagrahas*) (Tripathi 178:286). Seven of the nine planets give their names to the days of the week.[7] The association of the rivers Ganga and Yamuna with entrances is widespread in Orissan temple architecture.[8] The devadasis are not specifically associated with the major rivers such as Ganga, Yamuna, or Saraswati, but rather with the 'water nymphs', the *apsaras*. Rivers and planets are associated both with auspiciousness and inauspiciousness, whereas the devadasis are separated from inauspiciousness.[9] The devadasis are also not associated with the nine planets. The nine planets are often placed on door lintels. They are represented anthropomorphically. Two of the planets: *rahu* and *ketu* are inauspicious planets. *Rahu* is sometimes said to be a young widow. Thus the nine planets together represent both auspiciousness and inauspiciousness. The passage of time is not only associated with auspiciousness but with inauspiciousness as well, with death and decay. The rivers, like the nine planets, symbolize the passage of time, both in its life-giving, fertile aspect and in its death aspect. The rivers are the receivers of the ashes and bones of the dead, and of the offerings to the ancestors, as well as the givers of life. The flow of time is metaphorically represented by the flow of rivers which, like time, never flow backwards. Laksmī and the devadasis are associated with time in its auspicious aspect and dissociated from time in its inauspicious aspect.

Fertility is inherently ambiguous since it is intimately linked with the ancestors, and thus with death. In the realm of 'sweetness', the absence or stopping of time is emphasized. The term *nitya* can also be translated as meaning 'eternal'. In the Oriya tradition of Vaishnavism the terms *nitya Rādhā* and *nitya Kruṣṇa*, refer to the eternal union of Rādhā and Krishna in the eternal region called Goloka (cow-world).

In his book on *The History of Medieval Vaishnavism in Orissa*, Prabhat Mukherjee retells the following story found in the *Sunya Saṃhita* (Chapter 10 [Oriya Text]) by Āchyutānanda Dāsa (sixteenth century):

Krishna in Dvārakā was pining, because of his separation from Rādhā. The eight Pāṭavaṃśis or chief queens asked the reason of his anguish. Krishna said, 'I leave not for a moment Rādhā's side. Rādhā is in front (of me) and I am behind her as a lustful lover. We form one seed, being split into two component parts representing two separate entities.'

'Eternal Rādhā,' he added, 'dwelleth in the Great eternal region.' The queens had misgivings and they said, 'Sayest Thou, O Lord, that Rādhā dwelleth in Goloka, attended by 8 Sakhīs. Then wherefore didst Thou forsake her company? How couldst Thou relinquish Rādhā, who is one with Thee? Verily, the great men invent many lies, we being young women of gullible nature.' The chief queens then pressed for a glimpse of Rādhā in the eternal region. Krishna had to send for his vehicle, the Sun-Bird.

'How ambitious are these jealous Rājasika damsels,' declared Krishna before Garuḍa, 'they are desirous of gazing at (eternal) Rādhā.'

Krishna at first did not like the proposed journey to the eternal region. 'How wilt thou take them to that inaccessible place?' he said to Garuḍa. 'I fear Krishna of the eternal region. We will be chastised and admission will be refused to us.' But his apprehensions were finally overcome by his longing to gaze at eternal Krishna—being lovingly united with Rādhā. Sudām accompanied them.

While they were at a distance of two yojanas from the Rāsa arena, they were blinded by the glare of countless suns. Further progress was impossible as Krishna, the chief consorts and Garuḍa fainted. Recovering consciousness, they hastened to go back. Sudām was more fortunate. He managed to push forward and crossed one more yojana. From a distance, he beheld Rādhā-Krishna in eternal Rāsa exploit. The eight Sakhīs are surrounding them and 1600 Gopī damsels are witnessing the exploit (1970:97–9).

I have quoted this story at length because its central imagery is the opposition between Krishna in the realm of sovereignty with his eight wives, which is the realm of time, and Krishna in the eternal region, eternally united with Rādhā. The opposition is so strong that what Mukherjee translates as 'the mundane Krishna' is not able to enter into the eternal region. This brings to mind what Jack Hawley writes about one of the 'plays' staged today in Brundāban:

One of the central dramas enacted in the *māhārās līlā*, in fact, depicts the battle of *kām* and *prem*. Kām tried to gain access to the circle of the *rās*, but

finds that he cannot enter; *prem* reigns there in the connection which binds Krishna and the *gopīs* (1977:653).

Kāma (Hindi Kām) cannot enter into the circle of the *rāsa* dance. Kāma belongs to the realm of 'sovereignty' where the mundane Krishna dwells with his eight queens, which is opposed to the timelessness of the eternal region.

In this world bound in the flux of time, auspiciousness with the passage of time becomes inauspiciousness. In Brundāban, the ambivalence of time is suspended. We are left with a type of auspiciousness—and it is that since the symbolism speaks of it—which is outside of time; a transcendent type of auspiciousness. The existence in Hindu thought of such a notion is confirmed in the writings of a twelfth-century Śrīvaishnava theologian, Parasara Bhattar, who has this to say about the word *śubham* (auspicious): 'Auspiciousness is of two kinds, one pertaining to material things, and of this life; the other refers to the spiritual way [leading to *mokṣa* (salvation)]' (in V. Naranayan 1983).

The theme of the double aspect of time—its auspiciousness as well as its inauspiciousness—is expressed in the symbolism of food found in the festival of the first feeding of Krishna called Nandoścaba. A play reenacting this event is staged in the temple. Two devadasis participate in it playing the role of Nanda's (Krishna's foster father) two wives: Yaśodā and Rohinī. The right to perform the role of Yaśodā belongs to Radha. She inherited it from her devadasi mother. The role of Rohinī is today played by Bisaka. Radha gave me vivid and detailed descriptions of this festival which I corroborated with other devadasis and *paṇḍās*.

Description of Nandoścaba

In the morning of that day Radha sends a message to the house of a brahmin temple servant (of the *pratihāri* type, in charge of guarding doors and entrances to the temple) along with some food. That food consists of *pāna* (betel nut leaf), *guā* (betel nut), milk sweets and flowers. The message is a request to that person to send one of his young sons to the temple to play the role of Krishna. That same morning Radha and Bisaka also send some food to the house of the brahmin temple servant who will play the role of Nanda. This man is the Bhitaracha Mahāpātra—the priest in charge of opening the doors of the temple in the morning and one of the most important priests in the temple. The devadasis send to his house betel nuts, fruits, white

(raw) rice and raw vegetables as well as two garlands. The two devadasis then get elaborately dressed and ornamented; on this occasion the devadasis wear golden ornaments (which today they have to borrow since they have had to sell their valuables). In particular they wear a golden ankle bracelet, which ordinarily can only be worn by queens. They go to the house of Bhitaracha Mahāpātra where the women of the house receive them. Other brahmin temple servants are also invited there and everyone is feasted with *mahāpraśād*. By such exhanges of food the relationship of Yaśodā to Krishna is established—a mother's relationship—and the relationship between Nanda and his two wives is also established by the gesture of women giving food to him.

After the feast the three main characters—Nanda, Yaśodā, and Rohinī—leave. The Brahmin playing the role of Nanda is made up with a beard and a big belly. They all go first to the palace where Nanda announces to the king that the festival is going to take place. The king gives Nanda a piece of cloth. The devadasis will go to the palace separately the next day and each will receive a sari. The three of them then head for the temple. Nanda puts his arms around the two women, for on this day they are his 'queens'. They enter the temple through the main eastern gate and turn right towards the bathing platform (*snāna maṇḍapa*) which is situated along the outer wall in the north-east corner. There they sit on the three round stone bases on which the main images of the temple are placed at the time of the bathing festival. Rohinī, who is Nanda's first wife, sits on his left and Yaśodā sits on his right. At that time a brahmin temple servant dressed as a cowherd (*gāuḍa*; although there is a temple servant of that non-brahmin caste whose duty is to bring milk during some festival, the role is here taken by a brahmin) comes to the platform. He carries a one-string instrument and sings a simple two-line song while holding the front pleat of Nanda's *dhoti* (men's lower garment). The song says: 'Nanda, Oh my Nanda, Govinda [Krishna] has come; the drums, the conchshells, trumpets and flutes sound, there is bliss in the universe.'

This man, of the same caste as Nanda and a fellow villager, represents the friends and neighbours of Nanda who, the day after the birth of Nanda's son, come to celebrate with him and receive gifts of money and food.

All of them head westward, through the gate to the inner compound, to the temple of Lakṣmī (in the north-west corner of the inner

compound). In front of Lakṣmī's temple a cow and her calf are tethered. The cow's calf is her first one; such a cow is called 'first fruit cow' (*pratama phalī gāi*); she has never been milked before. The boy Krishna is also there (a child of six or seven, the son of a brahmin temple servant) all dressed and decorated, wearing in his hair a peacock feather. The two devadasis go towards him and a mild quarrel ensues between the two women about which one of them will carry Krishna on her lap first. Yaśodā wins; after she has held Krishna, Rohinī does so. During this time Nanda milks the cow, collecting the milk in a silver vessel. When the vessel is full, Nanda takes it to the audience hall of the Lakṣmī temple and offers the milk to a small image of the child Krishna which is placed in a swing. (That same image was first placed in a swing in the audience hall of the main temple and then was brought over to the Lakṣmī temple.) After having offered the milk to the image, Nanda brings the silver pot to the two devadasis who are sitting on the steps of the temple entrance with Krishna in Yaśodā's lap. He hands the pot to the two women with a bit of cotton. Yaśodā dips the cotton in the milk pot and feeds Krishna. At that precise moment a demoness called Putanā appears, shrieking horribly.

Putanā is played by a *gāuḍa* (cowherd) temple servant. He is made up to look horrible, the most prominent part of his costume being two enormous, pendulous breasts. The demoness tries to suckle Krishna. Just after having drunk the milk given by Yaśodā, the boy Krishna hits the demoness with a stick and she dies. (The stick wielded by Krishna was given by the king.)

The festival ends with Nanda carrying the image of the child Krishna back to the swing in the audience hall (also called the dance hall) of the main temple, accompanied by other brahmin priests and the devadasis. Nanda swings the swing and milk sweets brought from his house are offered by him to the image and then distributed to all those present; all the while the women present, including the devadasis, do *hulā-huli*.

Interpretation

This festival represents the first feeding of the infant Krishna. The festival is inaugurated by the placement of an image of the infant Krishna on a swing in the main temple and is concluded in the same way. The intervening episode, which constitutes the core of this play, takes place in the temple of Lakṣmī and not in that of Jagannātha.

It is in Lakṣmī's temple that the central episode of feeding takes place, and it is in front of it that the cow and calf are tethered and milked. It is also there that the devadasi feeds milk to the boy Krishna. Lakṣmī, the bountiful feeder, is a more appropriate hostess than the Lord of the Universe on this occasion. The milk offering to the image is done by the Brahmin priest, since only men can perform offerings to the gods. But the gesture of giving milk to a child is inseparable from femaleness and is enacted by a woman—the devadasi—feeding a boy.

Milk is the female food *par excellence*; it is raw and as such carries no hierarchical meaning. Milk also speaks of mother love; butter which is so important a food in Krishna's childhood can also speak of love in general. As Hawley expresses it 'Love . . . usually called *prem* in this context . . . almost inevitably becomes central in the interpretation of the meaning of butter if one pursues the topic at any length' (1977:632). Mother love, exemplified by Yaśodā,[10] is embodied in the act of suckling. Yaśodā churns milk and makes butter which Krishna steals; he also steals the butter made by the *gopīs*. Later as an adolescent he steals the love of the *gopīs*, and 'fondles the breasts of the *gopīs* and compares them to pots of sweet butter' (ibid.:631).

The new theme which appears at that moment is that of the demoness. The demoness attempts to suckle the boy with her poisonous milk.[11] The timing of the demoness episode is important: she appears at the very moment that Krishna takes milk from his foster mother for the first time. At that very moment Krishna is faced with two types of milk and by extension two types of breasts: the auspicious, good, milk/breast of the mother/cow and the bad, poisonous, breast of the demoness. Krishna destroys the latter.

The theme of the two types of milk, good and bad, is also found in the myth of the churning of the milk ocean. Although the myth was not told to me in connection with this ritual but on my visit to Lakṣmī's 'palace,' the Lakṣmī-Nrusingha temple on the beach, it is relevant since it is, like the ritual, associated with a temple of Lakṣmī. The fact that milk is given to Krishna for the first time in Lakṣmī's temple refers us also to Lakṣmī's own milk symbolism. Śiva plays in this myth a role similar to that of Krishna with Putanā. Śiva is not present during the festival of Nanda and Yaśodā, but he is present in his *ardhanārīśwara* form at the time of the evening ritual.

The gods (*devas*) under the leadership of Indra and the demons (*daityā*) under the leadership of Bali came to the seaside. They jointly decided to

churn the sea and to get valuables (*ratnas*) out of it. They put in the sea trees, plants, creepers having first made a paste of these and extracted their milky sap. That converted the ocean into milk. As a churning stick they uprooted the mountain Mandara and placed it in the sea. But it was not steady. The gods-and-demons (*surāsuras*) asked Viṣṇu to help. Viṣṇu took his tortoise form and placed the mountain on his back to steady it. Then the gods-and-demons went to the snake Bāsukī and told him that at the orders of Viṣṇu he should come and be the churning rope. The king of the snakes came to the sea-shore and the gods and demons rolled him three times around Mount Mandara. Then they said "Let us churn the ocean." The gods went to the head of the snake to begin to churn. Seeing this the demons refused to churn holding the tail of the snake. So the gods left the head side and gave that side to the demons. They began to churn. The snake got tired being pulled this way and that and was breathing heavily which tired the demons. The latter turned to Viṣṇu for help who gave them strength (*teja*). Getting this the churning continued happily. Out of the churning of the ocean the moon took its birth (*candaramā*) and went up to the sky. After more churning the 'desire-fulfilling-cow' (*kāmadhenu*) came out of the sea. After more churning a horse called Ucaiśrabā came out and it was taken by Indra. Then the elephant Airābatahastī with four tusks came out and it was also given to Indra. After more churning the lovely flowers called *pārijāta* came out and after the nymphs (*apsaras*) came out. These too were taken by Indra. The flowers for Indra's garden and the *apsaras* as companions for Indra's wife Śaci. Then after more churning the eight jewels (*aṣṭaratnas*) came out. Then the Lord of the Ocean Varuna decided to send his daughter Lakṣmī who had been born in a pond of Lotus flowers for Viṣṇu. Varuna and his sons carried Lakṣmī seated on a lovely carrier, surrounded by young women, to the surface of the sea. Lakṣmī, stepping down from her carriage, came towards Viṣṇu and garlanded him and Viṣṇu took her and she sat in his lap. All present saw them thus after which they resumed churning. Out of the ocean came Dhanvantarī, the physician of the gods, holding a pot of nectar (*amrutakumbha*). To retrieve the nectar the help of Viṣṇu was sought. Viṣṇu took, through his power of illusion (*māyā*) the form of an enchanting young woman called 'the enchantress' (*mohinī*) who seduced the demons. Forgetting all about the nectar, the demons, captivated by the beautiful woman, let the gods take the pot of nectar.

Then the ocean begged Viṣṇu to stop the churning because he was tired. So the churning was stopped and Lakṣmī and Nārāyaṇa (Viṣṇu) went to their abode.

When Śiva heard of this, that the gods and demons had churned the ocean and got many things, he was mad. He came to the spot and forced the gods and demons to churn some more. Being afraid of Śiva's anger the gods and demons obeyed. From that churning the poison (*biṣa*) from the

mouth of the snake came out and swelled up and threatened to destroy the whole world. The gods prayed Śiva to save creation and to drink the poison. Śiva drank the poison and it remained in his throat, that is why one of his names is 'the blue throated one' (*nīlakaṇṭha*). After this everyone praised Śiva and this brought the churning of the ocean to an end.[12]

In this myth there is a parallel with the festival of Nandoścaba. Out of the churning of the milk ocean two types of things came: (1) valuables; and (2) poison. Thus milk is separated into two components, one bad and one good. Krishna's action of killing the demoness is paralleled by Śiva's action of drinking the poison.

A poisonous milk-product reminds one of the Havik widows discussed by Harper who are believed to poison their relatives. The connection between poison and milk, both in this myth in which the milk is associated with Lakṣmī (though indirectly), and in the ritual in Lakṣmī's temple in which poisonous milk comes from the breast of the demoness, can be understood as a mythic-ritual transposition of the inauspicious widow who should not cook and feed people, at least not at auspicious ceremonies. Inauspiciousness, as we have seen, refers to death and illness; poison, as the opposite of 'nectar' (*amruta*), the elixir of life and well-being, is certainly an apt symbol of inauspiciousness.

The parallel between Krishna's action of killing the demoness and Śiva's action of drinking the poison has deeper significance. They both speak about a transcendence of time. The 'good milk' in this myth and the 'good milk' in the ritual of the first feeding of Krishna are very different. The things churned out of the ocean—apart from poison—are all expressions of sovereignty. In other versions of the myth, not only the moon is churned out but also the sun. The sun and the moon are intimately connected with kingship, as the following excerpt from Inden's article testifies:

> If the king had a special connection with the earth, he also had a special connection with the sun or moon. These two, the 'maker of the day' (*divākara*) and the 'maker of the night' (*niśākara*), were considered powerful deities transcending the earth but having strong influences on it, especially in regard to the day, month, and the seasons. The *purāṇas* in their accounts of the past classify India's kings as descended either from the sun or moon and most of the important dynasties of medieval India likewise claim solar or lunar origin. To have the substances of the sun and moon in their bodies meant that the kings too were powerful deities transcending the earth and were, like the sun and moon themselves, intimately involved in the regulation of the day, the month, and the year (1977:35).

The other items churned out of the ocean have a striking parallel to the contents of the 'increaser vessel' whose water is used to sprinkle the king. Some of them are insignia of royalty; the horse, the elephant, the courtesans (the *apsaras*). Lakṣmī's connection with sovereignty has already been pointed out. The physician of the gods corresponds to 'all the medicinal herbs' (*sarba ausodhi*) which are placed in the vessel for the king's coronation. The pot carried by the physician of the gods contains the 'elixir of long life, well-being and prosperity'. The word *amruta* is often translated as 'elixir of immortality'. But as Long points out in his article analysing this myth, immortality in Hindu mythology does not have the meaning it has in the Judeo-Christian tradition of eternal life but simply a long life, prosperity, progeny, freedom from disease and general well-being (1976:181).[13]

The association between this myth and sovereignty is also attested to by the fact that 'many of the versions are told primarily to account for the establishment of Indra as king of the Gods' (Long 1976:185).

The myth is also associated with the marriage ritual. In a footnote, Long mentions that:

> There is a popular Sanskrit stanza, customarily chanted in the context of the marriage rite, which enumerates 14 precious objects. This list of 14 objects includes the 12 standard jewels, occuring frequently in the purāṇas, plus the bow (*Śārnga*) and conch-shell (*Śankha*) of Hari (1976:n. 19:181).

This stanza ends with the words 'may these 14 jewels make every day auspicious (*mangalam*).' There is thus no doubt about the association between the things first churned out of the ocean and auspiciousness.

There is another, indirect, reference to the marriage ceremony. In other versions of the myth mentioned by Long, one of the beings churned out of the ocean is Varunī or Surā, the wife of Varuna. Those who accepted her were called *suras* and those who rejected her were called *asuras*. Gonda writes that *surā* is one of the manifestations of *kṣatra*, 'royal power', and mentions the custom referred to in Gobhila Gṛhya Sūtras of sprinkling the bride with it (1956:43–4). Thus spirituous liquor is expressive of both sovereignty and auspiciousness. The demons, as one of their names indicates (*asuras*), are devoid of sovereignty and auspiciouness. They are opposed to the gods.

Long's analysis associates the gods with life and the demons with death. He, however, does not bring out in his analysis the association between the gods, sovereignty, and auspiciousness, nor does he link the 'jewels' churned out of the sea with these two concepts. He sees the myth as essentially a draw between the gods and the demons:

In the first place, the resolution of the conflict between the Devas and Asuras is always tenuous and temporary. The two sides will continue to engage in combat as long as the cosmos itself endures. A permanent armistice, we can surmise, would dissolve the universe into a state of perfect stasis or chaos. *Secondly, according to the myth, in the end the opposites are not transcended or merged. The conflict is not resolved but is merely halted by the achievement of victory (complete, though temporary) for the gods* (author's emphasis) (1976:99).

Long bases his conclusion on the fact that the gods and the demons 'exist together in a relationship which is characterized, at once, by both contrariety and complementarity—and, as suggested previously, by consubstantiality' (ibid.:193). The consubstantiality of the gods and the demons refers to the fact that in the brahmanical myths they are represented as close kinsmen: 'They are said to be half-brothers . . . they are consanguine relations . . . and, as such, represent the primal reality as a united polarity and polarized unity' (ibid.:192).

This consubstantiality, expressed in kinship terms, is, I believe, to be understood in terms of the single undifferentiated category of Time. Time, as mentioned earlier, is categorized into both auspiciousness and inauspiciousness. The gods represent auspicious time and the demons represent inauspicious time, that is, death, decay and illness. The relationship between the two can be characterized by 'contrariety' in the sense of the principle of reversal discussed earlier. It can be said that since the spatial symbolism for ancestors and death is the reverse of that for the living and for the gods, the contrariety between the gods and the demons corresponds to an opposition between life and death.

I disagree with Long's statement that the opposites of life and death are not transcended in this myth. In Amrapalli's stories told in the context of her interpretation of the evening ritual, all the emphasis is on Krishna's transcendence of 'auspicious time'. His erotic dalliance with a woman not his own, i.e. not a wife, in which he retains his seed, the repeated opposition between 'sweetness' and 'sovereignty', all speak of an opposition between Krishna's actions and 'sovereignty and auspiciousness'. His action of killing the demoness speaks of his opposition to 'inauspicious time'. In fact Krishna has several encounters with various demons, which are so many mythic representations of 'inauspicious time'. In the myth of the churning of the ocean, Śiva's action of drinking the poison similarly speaks of a transcendence of inauspicious time. I speak of transcendence rather than opposition because in the myth Śiva is not associated with

auspiciousness. He receives none of the items churned out of the milk-ocean. He was not even present. Long himself, in a footnote, remarks about the manner in which Śiva drank the poison that 'structurally, the throat stands midway between the mouth and the stomach, thereby signifying that this act is a form of mediation' (1976:n. 33:196). Although Śiva's transcendence of auspicious time is not explicitly stated in the myth, but is only implied by the fact that he is an outsider to the drama and does not receive any of the auspicious products of the churning, in other myths, Śiva's transcendence of auspicious time is explicitly expressed.

First and foremost is Śiva's well-known antagonism to Kāma, vividly told in the episode of Śiva burning Kāma with the glance from his third eye (see O'Flaherty 1973:143). Furthermore, Śiva in his lengthy love-making to Parvatī does not spill his seed (ibid.:261–77).

Parallels between Śiva and Krishna, which we first encountered in the evening ritual of the devadasi where she sings Vaishnavite songs in front of an image of Śiva, can also be found in many other places of their mythology. For example, the whole setting of the Krishna *līlā* in the forest, outside of the village, reminds one of Śiva's surrounding when he is represented as the great ascetic. We have already come across the opposition between the forest and the city, raw food such as fruits, herbs, and roots versus the cooked delicacies of the city, in the myth of the seduction of the ascetic Ṛiṣyaśringa. This same opposition between the settled village or town and the forest pervades the descriptions of Krishna's *līlā* in the forest outside of Brundāban.

I would maintain that Śiva and Krishna are figures which represent the transcendence of Time, both in its auspicious and it its inauspicious aspects. This is not to say that the two figures are substitutable. Śiva has no dealings with *prema*. Śiva's transcendence of time is austere whereas Krishna's is full of joy and sensuousness; it is a feast of love.

There is another myth which speaks of Śiva's transcendence of Time, which was told to me by P. C. Mishra in the context of our preparations to go and witness in a village outside of Puri the festival of Kāḷī:

> Kāḷī [meaning both 'black' and 'time' in the feminine form] emerged from Durgā, out of the latter's anger after her slaying of the buffalo demon. The reason for Durgā's anger is the following: the gods had given a curse that the only way the buffalo demon would die was when he saw the sexual organ of a woman. Durgā, when she started her fight with the buffalo demon, did not know this. While fighting, Durgā in her anger produced other goddesses.

These were Mangaḷā, Hinguḷā, and Sitaḷā. Goddess Mangaḷā whispered in Durgā's ear what the curse of the gods was. Durgā in anger took off her robes and placed each of her feet on two distant hills. The buffalo was under her, between her legs, looking up at her vagina, and at that moment Durgā kills him by piercing him with her trident. Then Durgā was extremely angry with the gods for having given such a curse to humiliate her. Her anger grew so terrible that she transformed herself, grew smaller and black and left her lion mount and started walking on foot. Her name then became Kāḷī. With tongue lolling out and dripping with blood, she then went on a blind destructive rampage, killing everything and everyone in sight, regardless of who they were. The gods and the people became extremely worried and appealed to Śiva for help. Mahadev [Śiva] agreed and lay himself down, sleeping, on the path on which the furious, black and naked Kāḷī was coming. In her blinded anger she did not see him and stepped on his chest. At that moment Śiva's *linga* [penis] became erect and entered Kāḷī. At that instant Kāḷī recognized her husband and pulled out her tongue in ecstasy [the iconography at the time of Kāḷī *pūjā* represents that instant] and her anger disappears.

Kāḷī on her destructive rampage looks like a demoness; she is a destructive female; by entering her, Śiva neutralizes her destructiveness. This theme bears a striking resemblance to the theme of Śiva drinking the poison that came out of the milk ocean. Śiva bodily, literally, absorbs the destructive aspect of the female, once in his mouth, the other time through phallic penetration. Another myth representing the same theme is that of the descent of the Ganges.[14] In that myth Śiva's help is required to break the fall of that mighty river. If the goddess Ganga, with her gigantic weight of water, were allowed to fall directly on the earth, the terrible torrent would shatter it. Only Śiva could absorb that destructive female power by receiving her on his head, onto his immense matted locks. She re-emerged in the form of seven tamer streams out of the yogic locks of Śiva. Through Śiva's mediation, the destructive force of the river becomes not the opposite of destructive but the destructive and life-giving. Ganga coming out of Śiva's locks is the flow of Time, both auspicious and inauspicious. Śiva's and Krishna's response when confronted with poisonous milk-products are different in style: the former absorbs them and thus neutralizes them and the latter simply kills them.

Their modes of sexual union, however, are very similar. Both Krishna and Rādhā's union and Śiva and Parvatī's union (in the *arddhanārīśwara* iconography) are depicted as perfectly symmetrical.

In particular, the Oriya style of representing Krishna and Rādhā bears a striking resemblance to the iconography of Śiva half-man, half-woman. They both speak of the transcendence of hierarchy and of Time.

In the conclusion of his thesis, Hawley speaks of the butter thief plays as representing the reverse process from the one depicted in the churning of the milk ocean. Although he does not make his analysis in terms of Time but in terms of the abrogations of all boundaries, his insight is very relevant to my own argument:

> We have seen how Krishna's effect upon Brindāvan in the *mākhan corī līlā* is to turn the structure of Vaikuṇṭha [the abode of Viṣṇu where sovereignty reigns], as it were, inside out. But if we were to state that process in mythological terms, we might appropriately refer to it as the undoing of the effects of the churning of the milk ocean. Mythologically speaking, the ultimate effect would be that the world would be returned to some form of *pralaya* [original undifferentiated water] . . . . Thus the undoing of churning in the *mākhan corī lūt* returns us to the very state which the churning of the milk ocean initially altered (1977:707–8).

The churning of the ocean, as we have seen, separates from the original undifferentiated water auspicious time from inauspicious time. The former takes the form of all the various 'jewels' and the latter the form of poison. The original undifferentiated waters (*pralaya*) are thus 'outside' or 'before' the flow of Time. Thus to make a parallel between the 'play' (*līlā*) of Krishna and the original water (*pralaya*) is another way of saying that Krishna transcends Time.

CHAPTER 8

Time Dissolved

The morning ritual of the devadasis has—besides its overt, exoteric, royal symbolism—a secret, esoteric, interpretation. The *rājagurus* place this ritual in the *śākta* tradition, and interpret it accordingly. Trinayana, towards the end of my first period of fieldwork, gave me the text of the secret *śākta* ritual which he said was indispensable to fully understand the ritual of the devadasis. In the *śākta* tradition, the morning dance of the devadasis is considered to be part of a fivefold Tantric offering to the deities. This offering is referred to as the 'five m's'; it has an exoteric and an esoteric form. In the exoteric form, three of the five m's are vegetarian food offerings which form part of the morning meal.[1] These vegetarian offerings stand for the esoteric non-vegetarian offerings of meat (*māmsa*), fish (*māca*), and wine (*madya*). A fourth offering called *mudrā* has the same form in both esoteric and exoteric versions; it consists of black gram cakes. The fifth m in the exoteric version is the dance of the devadasi and it stands for sexual union (*maithuna*) in the esoteric version.

In the interpretation I offer of the esoteric ritual, I argue that the logic of its signs achieves a dissolution of time. The information used in interpreting this ritual comes from three sources: (1) The text of Trinayana called *Syāmā Pūjā Bidhi* (SPB)[2]; (2) a text given to me by S. N. Rajguru which is another version of the same ritual, called *Mahākāḷī Saparyā Vidhiḥ* (MSV). S. N. Rajguru procured this manuscript from an old brahmin in his home town of Paralakhemundi in the south of Orissa. Both texts are in the Sanskrit language but are written with the Oriya script;[3] (3) oral explanations given to me by both the *rājagurus* of Puri. The devadasis denied any knowledge of a *śākta* interpretation of their ritual or of the existence of a secret ritual. Trinayana insisted that they knew this tradition but were not divulging any of it since it is secret and by doing so they might attract the anger of the goddess upon themselves.

The secret ritual is a worship of goddess Kāḷī, who in this tradition

is identified with Jagannātha. The secret worship of Kāḷī is not performed on a regular basis but for the fulfillment of certain desires. Trinayana himself performs this worship. He gave me very few instances of causes to perform the worship. Apparently he performs this ritual upon request. One such was from a couple whose son was accused of murder and was expected to be given a death sentence in court. They requested Trinayana to perform this ritual to undo the possibility of a death sentence. The ritual was performed and the man was acquitted. Another example given was the case of a member of Trinayana's own family who had lost his job and had not been able to secure another one. Trinayana was understandably reluctant to discuss these things at length but what he did say gave me the clear impression that the ritual is done in order to reverse the ill-effects of a present situation.

The ritual can take place in the temple although its precise location there was not divulged.[4] When performed in the temple, it takes place at night, when the temple is closed and its gates are sealed. It can also take place in various secluded locations, such as an abandoned goddess temple or a cremation ground. The summary of the ritual to follow is based on Trinayana's manuscript.[5] There is a basic similarity of overall structure and in most of the *mantras* in both manuscripts but quite a bit of variation in the sequence and in some of the forms of ritual actions.

A Summary of the Syāmā Pūjā Bidhi

Preliminaries

The officiant (called *pūjāka* in the text) enters the place of worship and greets Kāḷī with folded hands. He washes his feet and rinses his mouth three times all the while reciting *mantras*. He sprinkles water on the place of worship also reciting *mantras*, thus purifying it.

He then proceeds to do the worship of the door-guardians (*duāra-pālas*). Sitting at the entrance to the place of worship he will, uttering *mantras*, spread cow-dung and draw sacred designs (*mandaḷa*) on it as well as show hand gestures (*mudrās*). He places a pot (*pātrī*) and fills it with water, worships it with perfume, flowers and white raw rice. He then does the 'binding of the ten directions' (*daśadig-bandhana*) to prevent evil influences from entering from outside. Using the water from the pot he worships the door guardians (a series of seventeen deities including the three major rivers, Ganeś and the

Lords of the fields *kṣetrapālas*). Worship always includes recitation of *mantras* which greet the deity and showing of hand gestures and offering incense, perfume, flowers and white raw rice, as a minimum. At the same time he rings a bell and recites the fifty letters of the alphabet in the normal order. This drives the ghosts, that might be lurking around, away.

He then does a worship to the earth (*pruthibī*). He purifies the seat (*āsana*) on which he will sit to do the worship. By means of meditative techniques involving hand and body postures (*nyāsa*) and the recitation of *mantras* he drives away all obstructions (*bighna*) and evil powers that might be around. He then greets his guru and his guru's guru (up to four generations of gurus). He greets Ganeś and the guardians of the fields (*kṣetra-pālas*). He greets the deities representing the ten directions.

The officiant, who faces east, places the articles of worship on his right, i.e. to the south, a water pot to his left, and behind him another water pot to purify his hands. Holding flowers in his hands and reciting a *mantra* to the flowers, the officiant then ties the flowers in his hair.

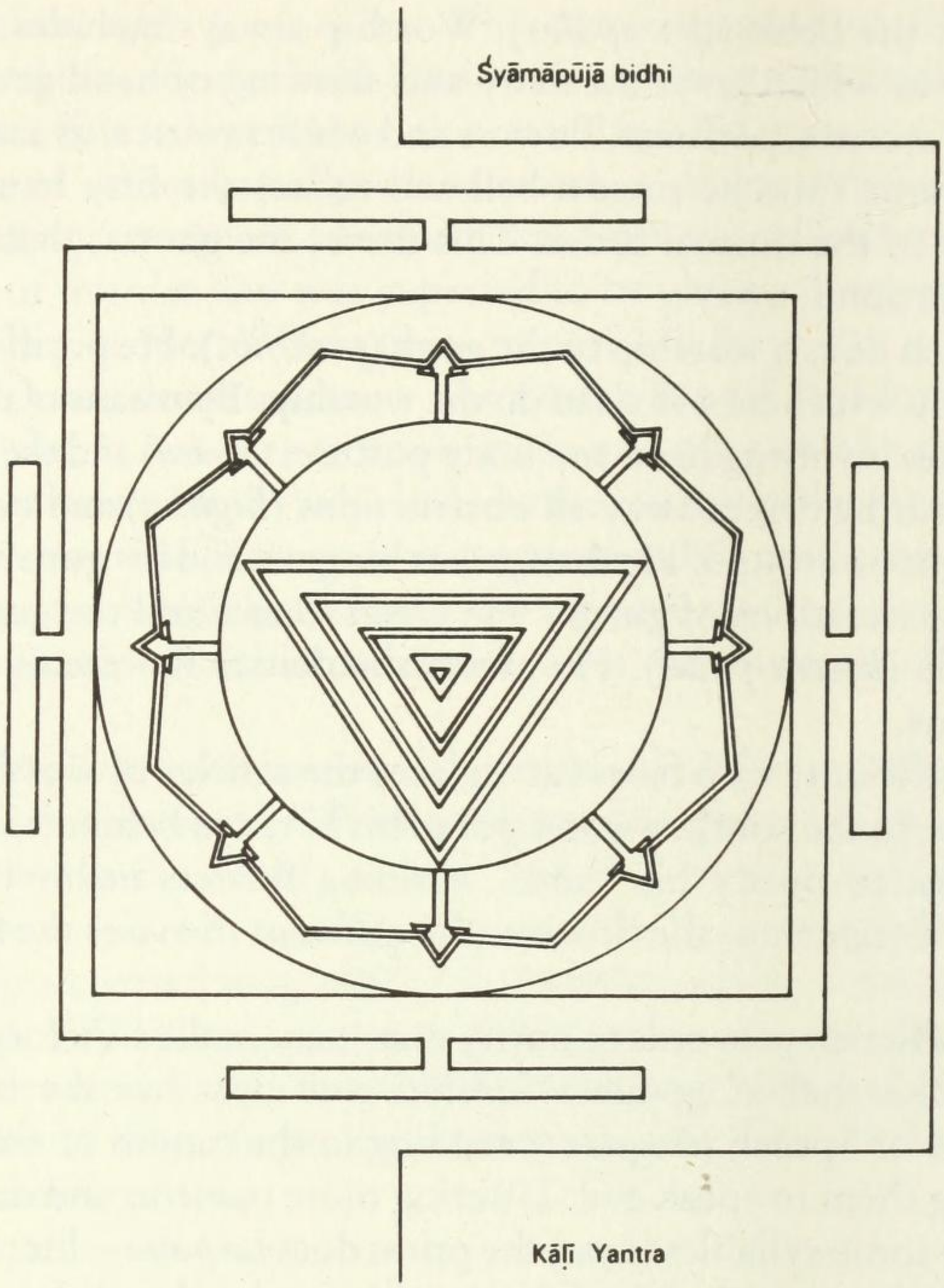
The officiant proceeds to purify marijuana, called Victory (*bijayā*). He invokes her as goddess *Sambid* and says that she is also the Goddess of Speech (*Bagdevī*) residing in the mouth of enemies not allowing them to speak evil. Uttering more *mantras* and doing repetition of some syllables (*japa*) the priest does *tarpaṇa*—literally 'satisfaction'—by touching the *bijayā* to his forehead and then eating it. After eating this the officiant will feel very happy and out of this joy will start the worship (this is part of the text).

Transformation of the body of the officiant into a divine body

This is accomplished by the purification of the five elements of the body: *bhūtaśuddhi*. Then he establishes breath in this new body (*prāṇapratiṣṭhā*), and performs yogic breath control (*prāṇāyām*). He places the fifty letters of the alphabet on centers inside his body and on places outside his body (*antah mātrukānyāsa* and *bahir-mātrukānyāsa*). [These processes are not described in the text since they are standard procedures. They are described by Tripathi in his article (1978:290–5) on the daily worship in the temple.]

The drawing of the yantra of the Goddess

This *yantra* (sacred design) is drawn either on a plate of gold or drawn



with red sandal paste on a leaf of the *bel* tree (sacred to the goddess and Śiva) (see diagram). Then the officiant offers mental worship to this design, offering mentally the sixteen articles of worship, and doing a mental fire sacrifice with knowledge (*jñāna*) as the fire, his mind (*manas*) the spoon and his consciousness (*cit*) as the clarified butter.

Preparation of the articles for the great worship

(a) Preparation of the 'common water' (*sāmānārghya*): the officiant spreads cow-dung and on that draws a design (*mandaḷa*). He does *pūjā* to it. He places a tripod on this and on this tripod a conch-shell on which he has drawn a downwards pointing triangle. He does *pūjā* to the conch-shell and tripod. He fills it with water and in that water invites all the 'sacred waters' (*tīrthas*) by means of invocations. He does *pūjā* to the filled conch-shell.

(b) Preparation of the (metal) pot of wine. Preliminaries as in (a). After recitation of lengthy *mantras*, he draws designs with red sandal-wood paste, puts a red cloth on it, throws perfume, flowers and rice on it. He draws a triangle in red inside the pot (*ghata*). Then he pours wine in that pot. After doing that he will drive the curses which are in the wine away by reciting syllables and then he drives the sin (*doṣa*) out of the wine by the same method. Then by breathing on it, the officiant will blow through his nose onto the wine the substance from the union of Śiva and Śakti in his head. Then he will smell the wine and by doing so burn its bad smell and add a good scent from the spot in-between his eyebrows. Then by meditation (*dhyāna*) he will purify the wine and recite an invocation to the wine calling it by the name of the goddess Barunī. He also calls the wine *Kuḷasundarī*, 'beautiful maiden of the clan' and compares her to the nectar (*amruta*) that resides in the clan (*kuḷastha*). Then the officiant dips his thumb and middle finger in the wine and rubs his two hands and passes them all over his body. This is called a bath (*snāna*).

Holding a flower, the officiant recites a *mantra* holding the pot in his two hands. The *mantra* says that it destroys the sin of brahminicide (*brahmahatyā doṣa*) of the wine done by killing Kaca. He frees the wine from the curse (*śāpa*) of the sage Śukra. He then places the pot on a design he previously made on his left side (north) and recites a *mantra* which says that various gods reside in various parts of the pot. Viṣṇu is inside the pot, Śiva on its neck, all the gods in front of it, on its left the sages. The pot is filled with all the rivers and the Yoginīs reside on its inner surface and the Bhairavas inside of it. After more *mantras* the officiant draws on the surface of the wine a design with a blade of grass, writes some syllables, offers perfume and flowers and invokes various goddesses to reside in the pot.

The officiant follows this by doing the ten purifications (*daśa-samskāras*) to the wine. This is done by meditation (*dhyāna*) and recitation of lengthy *mantras*. The wine is invoked as Ananda Bhairavī. The former is mistress (*swāminī*) of the 64 Lakh of Crores of Yoginīs. She is also called goddess Surā.

The officiant does a fivefold *pūjā* of the wine and a repetition (*japa*) of the Gayatri *mantra* and a repetition of 'the great *mantra*' (*parama hamsah mantra*): *hamsah soaham soaham hamsah svāhā*, by which the officiant identifies himself with the 'great soul' (*paramātma*). Then he recites some more *mantras*. This brings to an end the '10 purifications'.

The officiant looks into the wine and with a flower draws a triangle, moving his hand clockwise and then writes the letters of the alphabet on the surface of the wine. Again bringing the nectar (*amruta*) from the union of Śiva and Śakti in his brain through his nostril, he adds it to the wine. The wine is thus transformed into nectar. He recites a *mantra* stating this.

(c) Preparation of the meat. The meat which has been cooked is placed on a design. With gestures the officiant recites the 'root mantra' which is the *mantra* of Dakṣinakāḷīkā. Then he sprinkles the meat with water from the common conch-shell. Then with gestures and the recitation of the *mantra* which states that this is nectar, he transforms the meat into nectar.

(d) Preparation of the fish. The fish is also cooked. The same is done as for the meat.

(e) Preparation of the black gram cakes (*mudrā*). The cakes should be round. The same is done as in (c) and (d).

(f) Preparation of the fifth m (*pañcama makāra*). A young woman is brought—she should not be old—and must not be menstruating. She may be married or unmarried and should belong to any of the following classes of women: a dancer (*natinī*); an adopted girl (*pāḷinī*); a courtesan (*beśyā*); a washerwoman (*rajakī*); a barber woman (*nāpitānganā*). Drawing a downwards pointing triangle on his left, the officiant seats her completely naked on that design. She sits cross-legged so that her vagina (*yoni*) is completely visible. The officiant, reciting *mantras* and sprinkling water in the same manner as previously, purifies the woman's *yoni*. With a blade of grass the officiant touches the *yoni* while reciting a Vedic *mantra* to make the womb fertile. Trinayana gave the following gloss for this *mantra*: 'Om, let Viṣṇu create the *yoni* let Viśvakarma give shape to your form. Let Prajāpati place the germ in your womb. Let Bidhātā cause your impregnation. Let the Amābāsyā [new moon] present her womb to you. Oh, Saraswatī, give your womb to her. Let the impregnation be done by the Āświns who hold a garland of lotus.'[6] Then looking at the *yoni* he recites a *mantra* stating that the nectar flows. As a rule then the female sexual fluid (*raja*) should fall down itself (*swatah raja pāta*). But if it does not the officiant then engages in sexual intercourse (without ejaculating, information given orally). This brings out the sexual fluid which he collects on a *bel* leaf to which he adds several perfumes. To that leaf he does the same purificatory actions as for the other substances.

(g) Preparation of the 'special water' (*biśeṣārghya*). With the water from the common conch-shell, the place between the seat of the officiant and the *yantra* of the goddess is purified. On this spot the officiant draws a design and he does *pūjā* to its various parts. He then places a tripod there and does *pūjā* to it. Drawing a triangle with red sandal-wood paste on a conch-shell, he places that conch-shell on the tripod. This conch-shell is called the *Śrī Pātra*. It is welcomed as the conch-shell of goddess Dakṣinakāḷīkā. Bringing wine from the wine pot, in the left hand, the officiant half fills the conch-shell. He then fills it with water from the common conch-shell (*samānārghya*) and while doing this he recites the letters of the alphabet in inverse order (*biloma*). He does a *pūjā* to this conch-shell with perfume, flowers and several kinds of leaves. Then he adds in it some portion of the meat, fish and black gram cakes. He also puts in it the *bel* leaf on which the female sexual fluid was collected. Lastly he puts in the conch-shell what is called 'the self-born flower' (*swayambhukuṣuma*) [which is a piece of cotton on which has been collected the first drop of menstrual blood from a girl menstruating for the first time; this was told to me orally].

The officiant then does a *pūjā* to three divine couples: Brahma-Gayatrī, Viṣṇu-Śrī and Śiva-Ambikā reciting the *mantras* of these deities. Touching the conch-shell the officiant recites the Vedic *mantra* to make the womb fertile (which was recited on the *yoni* of the woman).

He draws again on the surface of the liquid and writes some letters and invites all the rivers to reside in the conch-shell. He meditates and imagines the *yantra* of Kāḷī to be in the water of the conch-shell. The officiant then invites Kāḷī to reside in this Śrī Pātra and he does a *pūjā* to her. He then obstructs the evil spirits (*digbandhana*) and establishes breath (*prāṇapratiṣṭhā*) in the conch-shell, which is now the goddess Kāḷī. This conch-shell should not be disturbed in any way up to the end of the ritual. It must be kept steady on its base and great care must be taken not to disturb it.

(h) Placement of seven pots, (*pātra*). These pots contaiṇ wine and are called respectively: *guru pātra*, *bhoga patra*, *śakti pātra*, *yoginī pātra*, *bīra pātra*, *baḷi pātra* and *pādyādi pātra*. The seven pots are placed in between the wine pot and the 'special conch-shell' (*Śrī Pātra*). Each of these pots is placed on a design and *pūjā* is done to it. They are filled with wine from the wine pot. They are purified in the same manner as described for the other substances. The pots are then given the *mantra* of the main deity i.e. Dakṣinakāḷīkā.

The officiant brings some meat with the thumb and the middle finger of his left hand and with the same fingers of his right hand some drops from the Śrī Pātra. He mixes the meat and the liquid together and holding the meat in his left hand, touching it to his forehead, he does *tarpaṇa* (satisfying) to Anandabhairava and Anandabhairavī; then he does *tarpaṇa* to the feet of his guru and three more generations of gurus and does the same to the gurus' wives.

After this he does *tarpaṇa* to the main deity by taking meat with the same fingers of the right hand and bringing wine with the fingers of the left hand from the *bhoga pātra* and mixing the two, recites the 'root mantra' and this does the *tarpaṇa*.

(i) Purification of the substances (*tattvas*) of the officiant's body (*tattva śuddhi*). Touching his chest and reciting a lengthy *mantra* he purifies all the substances that make up his body. After that he brings drops from the Śrī Pātra with the same two fingers of his left hand, drinks it reciting a *mantra* in which he states that he is Brahman, he is the fire and he is making a fire oblation in his own self. He recites another *mantra* in which he says that he is directly realizing Brahman. After this the officiant is 'filled with Brahman' (*brahmanmaya*).

(j) The placement of the sixteen pots containing the articles for the worship of the goddess. (These sixteen articles are the same as those used for the main offerings in the temple. See Appendix 1 to Chapter 6). These should be copper pots. The fourth article (*arghya*) has water to which some of the fluid from the Śrī Pātra has been added. All of these pots are sprinkled with wine from the *pādyādi pātra* [see paragraph (h)]. There are two more pots, one containing betel nut and the other rice and grass (*durba*). All these pots are placed on the left of the officiant, covered with a silk cloth.

The great worship (mahāpūjā)

At this point, the officiant should dress and decorate himself like a housewife, wearing red clothes, vermilion mark (*sindur*), eye-black and ankle bracelets, and he should chew betel nut to redden his lips.

The officiant then purifies his hands, does some *nysāsas*, and recites some *mantras*. He meditates on Kāḷī as being in his heart and invokes her by a *mantra* which describes her. I will quote this *mantra* for it describes the iconography of the main deity.

Śrī Dakṣinakāḷīkā looks furious, opening her jaws wide. Her hair hangs loose. She has four arms. She wears a garland of severed heads. In her lower left hand she holds a freshly cut head and in her upper left hand she holds a

sword. In the right hands she displays the 'fear not' gesture and the 'boon granting' gesture. She is green and glows like the dark clouds. She is naked. Blood streams from the garland of heads onto her body. Her two earrings are two corpses. Her three eyes dazzle like the rising sun. She looks terrible, exposing her large teeth. Her breasts are thick and pointed. At her waist she wears a garland of severed hands. She smiles and her face looks lovely with two streams of blood flowing down the sides of her mouth. She shouts loudly. She is standing in the cremation ground on the corpse-form of Śiva. She is surrounded by a pack of she-jackals. She is doing inverse sexual union with Mahākaḷā Bhairava. She puts her yoni on the Śiva-lingam quickly. She has become happy and her face is smiling.

Thus meditating on the goddess, the officiant should bring the 'glow' (*tejas*) of the goddess and place it on her *yantra*. By *mantra* he invites the goddess to reside in the *yantra*. He then establishes breath (*prāṇapratiṣṭhā*) in the *yantra*.

On the south side the officiant does the worship of Mahākāḷa. After some more yogic and meditative procedures, he asks of Mahākāḷa Bhairava the permission to do the worship of the goddess. Then he asks the permission of the goddess herself. He proceeds to do the worship of the goddess' entourage.

Worship of the goddess' entourage (abaraṇa)

The entourage of the goddess is conceived as residing in various parts of her *yantra*. They are conceived to reside in seven lines.

1. The body of the goddess.

2. Worship of the host of gurus (*gurugaṇa*). He does *tarpaṇa* by holding meat in the thumb and middle finger of the left hand and wine from the *guru pātra* in the right hand. He does *tarpaṇa* to four generations of gurus and their wives, invoking them by *mantras*, giving their names.

3. *Tarpaṇa* is done in the same manner as above to the fifteen corners formed by the five concentric triangles of the Kāḷī *yantra*. Each corner is given the name of a goddess.

4. *Tarpaṇa* is done to the base of the eight petals in the *yantra*. Each is given the name of a goddess.

5. To the tip of the eight petals wich are given the names of eigh different Bhairavas.

6. To the space between the square and the circle of the *yantra*. The ten directions are satisfied (*tarpaṇa*).

7. The goddess herself is imagined residing in the *yantra*, having

four arms holding a sword and cut head in the left hands and showing the 'fear not' and the 'boon granting' gesture in the right hands. The officiant does *tarpaṇa* to her, in her various parts. She resides at the center of the *yantra* and Mahākāḷa Bhairava resides at her feet, she is standing on him and the officiant also 'satisfies' him.

The sixteenfold offering

The sixteen articles (*upacāras*) are purified by hand gestures and sprinkling with water from the *arghya* pot into which some of the content of the Śrī Pātra has been put. Inviting the goddess, along with her family, her weapons, her carriers and Mahākāḷa Bhairava by *mantra*, she is requested to accept the offerings. These are offered by means of gestures and *mantras*.

Offering of the food (No 15). The officiant takes meat in the thumb and middle finger of his right hand and by the same fingers of the left hand he takes wine from the *bhoga pātra*, and mixes the two together. Holding the *bhoga pātra* in the left hand and the meat in the right hand the officiant does *tarpaṇa* reciting *mantras* to the goddess, inviting her to eat. He does the same with fish, black gram cakes, a sweet rice preparation (*khiri*), and fruits.

Then the officiant does yogic breath control (*prāṇāyām*). He offers *arghya* and then betel to the goddess. He waves the fly-whisk and holds the mirror.

Offering called baḷi

An offering called *baḷi* is done to eight deities, residing in various places of the worship.

1. To Ganeś, residing in the south-east corner of the seat of the goddess (*agnikoṇa*). A *pūjā* is done to a design drawn there. Then the officiant makes a ball of food by mixing cooked food offered to the goddess with meat, fish and black gram. He holds it in the left hand and in the right hand he brings wine from the *baḷi pātra*, and he mixes the two. He places the ball of food on a plantain leaf and recites a *mantra* of Ganeś.

2. To Batuka in the south-west corner (*Nairuta*). Same procedure as above.

3. To the guardians of the field (*kṣetrapālas*) in the north-west corner (*Bāyukona*). Same as above.

4. To the Yoginīs in the south (*Dakṣina*). The food is held in the thumb and the little finger and the wine comes from the *yoginī pātra*, otherwise same as above.

5. To all the ghosts (*sarbabhūta*) on the north (*uttara*), same as 1, 2 and 3.

6. To the she-jackals (*sībā*) in the place of *pūjā* (*pūjāgruha*), the wine from the *baḷi pātra* is brought with all the fingers of the left hand.

7. To Mahākāḷa, in front of the goddess, or the south. Wine is not brought but the liquid from the Śrī Pātra.

8. To Dakṣinakāḷīkā, next to Mahākāḷa; the liquid is also brought from the Śrī Pātra.

At the end of this offering the officiant bows down and waves a lamp (*āḷati*).

Entrance into the Circle (cakra prabeśa)

The place of the worship is called the *cakra* (disc, circle, center). The officiant is called 'the lord of the circle' (*cakreśvara*). Into this place come several men and women. The men, followers of the officiant, are called Bīras and their women companions are called Śaktis. They enter in order of seniority, couple by couple. Upon entering they salute the *cakra*. They sit in a circle in such a way that the officiant can touch them. The women sit on the left of the men. The officiant does *pūjā* to all of them with perfume, flowers and white raw rice, in order of seniority. The officiant then hands the *śakti pātras* (containing wine) to the women and the *bīra pātra* to the men. This is followed by a round of five drinks, as follows:

1. The officiant gives meat to the men and women. Holding it in the left hand they do *tarpaṇa* (after having mixed the meat with wine from their wine pot which they keep on a stand next to them). Touching the meat to their head they do *tarpaṇa* to the guru. Touching it to the heart they do *tarpaṇa* to the main deity. Then holding the wine pot in the left hand they do the praise of this pot (*pātrabandanā*), while holding the meat in the right hand and reciting *mantras*. They then drink, thinking that they are drinking in the mouth of the *kuḷakundaḷinī*, and they eat the meat.

2. Fish is distributed and more wine. They do the same as in 1.

3. Black gram cakes are distributed by the officiant and more wine. The same is done as above.

4. The officiant distributes meat, fish and black gram cakes. The same is done as above.

5. The last drink. The officiant distributes meat, fish, black gram cakes and another gram preparation (*baṭuka*). The men and women recite a *mantra* which was glossed by Trinayana as follows:

This 5th pot rests on its stand which is round and should be taken to be the snake Bāsukī and the pot is taken to be the earth. The wine in the pot is taken to be the water of the seven seas. The meat is taken to be the eight elephants of the eight directions (*aṣtadiggaja*). I offer this *pūjā* to Bhairava and by this I am protected by the gods-and-demons (*surāsura*), who are the servants of the goddess.

The *bīras* and the *śaktis* then put their pots upside down. Everyone present offers a handful of flowers (*puṣpānjali*) to the goddess and asks the goddess to give them the memory of this life and the previous lives and ask her to grant them to be the master of the earth (*pruthibī-pattittva*), good luck (*sāubhāgva*), beauty (*labanya*), great devotion, great knowledge.

Then the officiant will do the offering of the lamp of the clan (*kuḷadīpa*). He recites a *mantra* asking the goddess to forgive him if he has done any mistake in this worship. He prostrates himself with his entire body.

Then the officiant circumambulates the goddess three times in the reverse direction (keeping his left shoulder towards her).

He purifies the special water in the Śrī Pātra and recites the following mantra:

Oh Genitrix of the three worlds (*Trailokyajananī*), always beloved of Śiva, be satisfied with the worship I have done. Come, along with your family into my heart and sleep there with Lord Śiva.

After reciting this, he drinks the remaining liquid from the Śrī Pātra and places the conch-shell upside down (*ultā*).

Then the officiant offers some globules which are the left-overs (*ucchiṣṭa*) to *ucchiṣṭa* Bhairava and to *ucchiṣṭa caṇḍāluṇī* (two low class beings).

Abandoning (bisarjana)

By mental worship and hand gestures the officiant imagines the goddess in his heart and thinks of himself as Brahman. He then washes away the *yantra* of the goddess and taking some flowers from the goddess he ties them in his hair. By *mantra* he asks the gods to leave the wine pot (*ghata*) and to leave the place of worship. He then offers betel nut to the men (*bīras*) and asks them and the women to leave. He himself goes outside and does a last offering (*baḷi*) of rice, fish and meat to the ghosts (*bhūta*) and to the she-jackals outside.

Interpretation

This is evidently a ritual rich in meaning, abundant in details. The interpretation to follow is not offered as a definitive statement. It is made in the context of the present study, which attempts to elucidate the cultural meanings of auspiciousness and inauspiciousness. The ritual is quite well-known and practiced by followers of the *śākta* tradition. I have made no attempt here to elicit what such a ritual means to those who practice it. Trinayana, besides elucidating certain technical terms, did not interpret the ritual for me. He gave me the text as an interpretation of the rituals of the devadasis, in itself needing no further interpretation. The interpretation to follow does not attempt to 'explain' every action of the ritual and must be understood in its own context of use, namely the quest for a logic of the devadasis' practices.

Although the overall sequence of events in the ritual follows fairly closely the ritual of the main offering in the temple, my contention is that the main themes in it are derived from domestic rather than temple rituals. In particular the themes derived from the domestic rituals—i.e. rituals which take place in the home and not in the temple—such as wedding, puberty, funeral, and ancestor worship. I do not mean to say that this ritual *is* a domestic ritual; it is not. But it borrows the symbolic idiom of the domestic rituals. To begin with, the very name of the ritual points in that direction: it is called the worship of the circle of the clan. *Kuḷa* is a kinship term and refers to a lineage, a line of men with their wives.[7] The term *kuḷa* also refers to the continuation in time of generations, the past generations being the ancestors and the future generations the progeny that the wife will bear. Thus time—past and future—is inseparable from this notion.

My contention is that this ritual through symbolic manipulation achieves a collapsing of time; past and future are eradicated; the ancestors are all present and the fertile coupling of man and woman is transformed into the infertile—or more correctly timeless—androgyne. Let me attempt to substantiate these assertions by enumerating first those motifs which I have been able to identify with weddings and puberty rituals.

(a) *Wine*. As the name of the goddess of wine in one of the *mantras* indicates, the reference is to the churning of the milk ocean. Wine is called both Varunī—the feminine form of Varuna, the ocean—and Surā. Surā was churned out of the ocean (Varuna); she goes to the

gods (*Suras, Devas*) and the demons are called *asuras* because they are deprived of this wine. In the other manuscript (MSV), in one of the *mantras* to the wine, it is called 'the messenger of *kāma*'. This coincides with what Gonda writes about wine as being conducive to love (Gonda 1956:43). Of course wine drinking is also considered to be a sin (*doṣa*) and hence the elaborate actions in the ritual taken to drive the curse out of it and destroy the sin that it contains.[8] The bath of the officiant in which he rubs his whole body with his wine-soaked hands parallels strikingly the custom which Gonda mentions, found in Gobhila Gṛhya Sūtras (2, 1, 10), of sprinkling a bride with wine so that her whole body is moistened with it (ibid.). Wine is therefore associated with auspiciousness.

(b) *Black gram*. Black gram features in the description of the king's wedding; two days before the wedding 'the good beginning of grinding black gram' (*biḍi jāi anukuḷa*) takes place. One of the devadasis told me that all auspicious works, especially weddings, start with the grinding of black gram (*biḍi*).

(c) *The classes of women who can be the partner for sexual intercourse*. To the five classes mentioned in the description above must be added the wife of the officiant since in the MSV only two classes of women are mentioned: the wife of the officiant and a courtesan (*beśyā*). Trinayana confirmed orally to me that the wife of the officiant could be the sexual partner in the ritual and specified that several women in his family are very knowledgeable in this ritual and even check him on procedures.

What all these women—with the possible exception of the 'adopted woman' (*pāliṇī*)—have in common is their association with wedding and/or puberty rituals, or more generally with fertility. The dancer (*nātinī*) must be classified along with the courtesan (*beśyā*) for traditionally the dancing girl was also a prostitute or courtesan. There is no need to repeat the arguments for the association between the courtesan/dancer with wedding and fertility; they have been explored in previous chapters.

The barber-woman, as we have seen, plays a central role at the wedding ceremony. She brings the bride to the wedding platform and sits by her during the whole ceremony. She is the one who handles the bride during the whole wedding ritual.

The washerwoman (*rajakī*) as her very name indicates is associated with menstrual blood. During the puberty ceremony she accompanies the girl on the seventh day to the tank or river for her purificatory

bath and receives from her the garment that she was wearing. The washerman is the one who washes the clothes soiled by menstrual blood and thus the association between the washerwoman and the puberty ceremony is certainly appropriate.

Srinivas mentions (1952:85) that although the washerman normally cannot enter the central hall of a Coorg house, during weddings he brings the cloths which will decorate the house and he himself hangs these cloths. The house subsequently has to be purified and this strikes Srinivas as something of a contradiction. What we have here is by now the oft encountered disjunction between purity and auspiciousness. Menstrual blood is impure and the washerman who deals with it is also impure but on the other hand menstrual blood is an auspicious sign and the washerman as a specialist in menstrual blood has—appropriately enough—a ritual role to play at the wedding where fertility and auspiciousness are the order of the day.[9] Auspiciousness not being purity, the house does have to be purified after the washerman's activities in it.

The washerwoman is reported by scholars to have been the favourite sexual partner in Tantric rituals since very ancient times (Dasgupta 1946; Dimock 1966:101–2). Eliade writes the following about the washerwoman:

> The role played by girls of low caste and courtesans in the tantric 'orgies' (*cakra*, the tantric wheel) is well known. The more depraved and debauched the woman, the more fit she is for the rite. *Doṃbī* ('the washer-woman' . . .) is the favourite of all the tantric writers (cf. Kaṇha's Caryas, in Shahidullah, p. 111 ff.). 'O *doṃbī*! thou art all besoiled . . . Some call thee ugly. But the wise clasp thee to their bosoms . . . O *doṃbī*! no woman is more dissolute than thou!' It is the symbolism of the 'washerwoman' and the 'courtesan' that is of chief significance, and we must reckon with the fact that, in accordance with the tantric doctrines of the identity of opposites, the 'noblest and most precious' is hidden precisely in the 'basest and most common' . . . The authors of the *Caryas* saw the *doṃbī* as the representative of 'emptiness'—that is, of the unqualified and unformulable *Grund*, for only the 'washerwoman' was free from every qualification and attribute, social, religious, ethical, etc. (1973:261).

Eliade's doctrine of the identity of opposite is I think in general most insightful. Indeed, this view of the varied inversions present in Tantric rituals is very similar to the one I have just described as an expression of 'the emergence from time'. In the case of the washerwoman, however, I cannot accept his argument. The symbolism of

the washerwoman is not that of the identity between the basest and most common and the noblest and most precious but that of fertility. In the symbolism of fertility, the wife—and in the case of the ritual discussed here, the wife belongs to the highest social stratum in Orissa—and the washerwoman can equally well express the ideas surrounding auspiciousness and fertility. The only criterion is that she be young, i.e. she cannot be past the childbearing age, she cannot be infertile. Thus, although I agree with Eliade's general characterization of this ritual as 'an emergence from time', the symbolism used to express such an emergence is not that of status, of purity and impurity, but that of auspiciousness and inauspiciousness.

This identity of all women, regardless of their caste differentiation, is captured in the fact that the sexual partner is called a *śakti*. In the MSV she is called that and in the oral exegesis of the *rājagurus*, the sexual partner was always referred to as *śakti*. The dance of the devadasi which stands for the fifth m (*maithuna*) is called by the *śāktas* '*śakti ucchiṣṭa*', 'the leavings of *śakti*'.

(d)*The invocation to make the womb fertile*. Bharati writes that this *mantra* is also used in the Vedic marriage ceremony (1965:253) and also that it is to be pronounced by the husband before he cohabits with his wife for offspring (ibid.:273). The same author is puzzled by the use of this *mantra* in the left-hand ritual; this is what he says:

> Strange, because the purpose of the *pañcamakāra* practice is certainly not conception, but the very opposite—immersion into the *Brahman*—essence, which is the consummation of that process of involution, not of procreation (ibid.:253).

Although, like Eliade, Bharati's general characterization of the ritual as an involution corresponds certainly to what I am arguing, the symbolism which communicates this involution, this dissolution of time, is the one centering on fertility and death/ancestor worship. The recitation of this *mantra* in this ritual is clearly not for the purpose of procreation since the man must not ejaculate. The recitation of an auspicious invocation juxtaposed to certain other inauspicious traits is what achieves the dissolution of the separation between the past (ancestors, dead people) and the future (progeny). The inauspicious trait in this case is the nakedness of the *śakti*.

In Puri, at, or before the wedding, the bride and groom (unless they are brahmin, in which case the groom has received an initiation at the time of his thread ceremony) receive a *mantra* from a guru. The

devadasis told me that by receiving such a *mantra*, the couple engages itself to never appear naked in front of each other. For the husband to see his wife naked or vice versa is considered to be inauspicious. As Radha put it to me: 'If I am seen naked then Lakṣmī will leave me.' The inauspiciousness of nakedness is the theme of a story found in the *Śatapata Brāhmaṇa* (11.5.1–8) and also in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* (IX. Part 2) about the *apsaras* Urvaśi and king Pūruravas in which a mortal king falls in love with a heavenly courtesan. The following is a translation of the *Śatapata Brāhmaṇa*:

> Urvaśi said when she wedded Pūruravas: 'Thrice a day shalt thou embrace me; but do not lie with me against my will, and let me not see thee naked for such is the way to behave to us women.' She then dwelt with him a long time and was even with child of him, so long did she dwell with him. Then the Gandharvas said to one another, 'for a long time indeed, has this Urvaśi dwelt among men; devise ye some means how she may come back to us.' Now, a ewe with two lambs was tied to her couch, the Gandharvas then carried off one of the lambs. 'Alas' she cried 'they are taking away my darling, as if I were where there is no hero and no man.' They carried off the second and she spake in the self-same manner.
> He then thought within himself, 'How can that be (a place) without a hero and without a man where I am?' And naked as he was, he sprang up after them; too long he deemed it that he should put on his garment. Then the Gandharvas produced a flash of lightning, and she beheld him naked even as by daylight. Then indeed, she vanished; 'Here I am back,' he said and lo! she had vanished. Wailing with sorrow he wandered all over Kurukṣetra . . . Then will he lie in Nirriti's lap (Eggling 1972:68–71).[10]

By seeing Pūruravas naked, Urvaśi left him. He thus lost his wife and his child to be since she was pregnant. The inauspicious event was inaugurated by the disappearance of Urvaśi's two lambs whom she called 'my sons' (see n. 10). Loss of wife and progeny seem indeed to be the result of seeing one's spouse naked. Even worse, the prognostic for Pūruravas is bleak indeed for he 'will lie in Nirriti's lap'. Nirriti is the goddess of death and decay.

In the ritual which transforms a man into a renouncer (*sannyāsi*) in which that person undergoes a ritual death in a cremation ground, the initiate after lying between three pyres gets up and 'clad in the four directions'—to use Bharati's expression—takes a bath in a river (Bharati 1970:154).

Furthermore, in the iconography of Kāḷī standing on the corpse of Śiva, she is depicted as being naked. The naked Kāḷī is associated with

the cremation ground and with corpses. Thus, I think that the inauspiciousness of nakedness, when juxtaposed with sexual intercourse which is auspicious, expresses the collapsing into one dimension of two directions of time: past and future. That time is a crucial dimension of the ritual cannot be seriously questioned since the main deity is called Kāḷī, which also means Time and her consort is called Mahākāḷa, Great Time or even Trikāḷanātha, Lord of Three Times (in MSV) which the translator of that manuscript, S. N. Rajaguru, glosses as: 'Lord of three times, viz. the past, present, and future' (MSV:81).

(e) *Menstrual Blood*. We have already seen in Chapter 3 that the puberty ritual is auspicious and also that it used to take place after the wedding and was considered to be part of the wedding ceremony. Another context in which the meaning of menstrual blood can be explored is that of the festival of the menses of the goddess, called Raja Saṃkranti. The word *saṃkranti* refers to the passage of the sun from one sign of the zodiac to another; *raja* as we have seen can mean menses. The menses of the goddess takes place around the month of Jyeṣṭha (May–June) usually before the bathing festival (Snāna Purnimā, see next chapter) which takes place on the last day of Jyeṣṭha. I was unfortunately not able to witness the festival which is celebrated in villages but not in Puri. However, I interviewed a farmer from a village about two miles out of Puri on the subject. I also have the fieldnotes of an anthropologist, Judith Blank, who witnessed the festival in northern Orissa in the district of Kheondjar.

The festival is celebrated for four days. The earth—*pruthibī*—is believed to be menstruating at that time and so are all the goddesses. The first day is called First Saṃkranti (*pahili saṃkranti*); the second day is called *raja saṃkranti*; the third day is called 'burning earth' (*bhuī dāhana*); the fourth day is called 'the bath of the Goddess' (*Ṭhākuraṇī Gāduā*). The 'burning earth' is so called because it is said that the red colour of the earth at that time, due to the earth's menstruation, makes it look as if it were on fire. This is also connected to the belief that if one sowed any seeds during these days they would burn up.

During the four days of the festival the women, like the goddess, are considered to be impure (*āśauca*); they do not wear the vermilion mark, oil or comb their hair, just like women during their menses. The festival is observed by everyone, irrespective of caste, except widows. The women are not supposed to do any domestic work during these days and it is the men who prepare the food. The women

play, sing songs and swing on swings made for this occasion. The men do not plow the earth nor do they have sexual relations with their women, who are treated as if they themselves were at their menses. In the words of the farmer: '*Pruthibī* is impure (*āśauca*); we as human males and females we live as Iśvara and Parvatī, so the women observe this festival. We are the Iśvara and they are Parvatī, so when mother goddess is impure, they, being Parvatī, are also impure.'

The first sowing of the seeds is done on the first day of the Candan festival. After Raja Saṃkranti, the rains are supposed to come. The farmers wait for water. When the rains come, they again plow to cover the seeds so that they can germinate. The earth, like women, to be fruitful, has to menstruate. In that farmer's village there is a woman who does not menstruate; he called her by the term *napuṣkī* (female eunuch). That woman, according to him, is very inauspicious. No one will marry her and she must not be seen when one starts out from one's house, for that would be very inauspicious. During a wedding that woman is kept inside so that there is no chance she might be seen by the wedding procession.

On the fourth day of the festival, in the morning the women will bathe and the goddess in the temple will also be bathed and her body rubbed with oil and turmeric. On that day ends the prohibition to plow or to use carts for the farmers. The earth's impurity is over, and so is the women's.

The songs which are sung by the women at that time are called Raja-swing songs *(rajadoli gīta)*. The farmer could or would not give me any sample of these songs. I will turn to Judith Blank's fieldnotes on this festival. She describes the various types of swings that she saw in front of every house. The women perform a dance called Catki, which is considered the heart of the play during this festival. The men are not supposed to see this dance. The dance consists of the reenactment of a wedding, one girl dressing as a groom and one as a bride. All the women join in and the excitement reaches high peaks.[11]

The association of menses with fertility and with marriage is clearly stated in this festival. Plowing the earth is equated with sexual intercourse, which during that time is suspended both with the earth and with women.

I will now turn to those motifs in the ritual which are also found in the funeral or the ancestor worship ceremony.

The term tarpaṇa

In Puri the word *tarpaṇa* is used to refer to the oblation for the ancestors. Such an oblation is done daily by brahmins as part of their morning ablutions during which they offer a palmful of water for their ancestors. It is also used to refer to the yearly oblation of food and water for the ancestors.

On the meaning of the term *tarpaṇa*, Kane writes:

> Manu III.82 provides that an householder should daily perform a śrāddha with food or with water or with milk, roots and fruits and thus please the Fathers. Śrāddha originally meant a sacrifice performed for the Fathers on Amāvāsyā (vide. Gaut. 15.1–2). By applying that word to the daily offering of water to the manes what is intended to be conveyed is that the special characteristics of śrāddha in the strict sense are to be extended to this daily rite so far as possible (Vol. 4:369).

Kane gives (in Vol. 2, Part I) a lengthy and fuller discussion of *tarpaṇa* which he translates as 'satiating by offering water'. There he cites many texts, and shows that *tarpaṇa* is an offering to gods, sages and ancestors (689–95). *Tarpaṇa* is not used in the daily temple ritual.

Thus the term *tarpaṇa* is an offering to gods which is strongly associated with an offering to the ancestors. The word is used throughout the ritual both for offering food to various deities, as well as when the officiant himself eats or drinks something and when the men and women who later join the worship eat or drink.

Non-vegetarian offerings

Today, the offering to the ancestors in Puri, as in many other parts of India, are done with vegetarian food. However, Srinivas reports that the Coorgs worship their ancestors with meat and liquor (1952:166). Veena Das in her study of the text by Gobhila on domestic rituals (dated between 500 and 200 BC) points out that these texts prescribe the use of non-vegetarian offerings for the ancestors (1977:99). In Puri, meat and fish are indispensable items in a feast and it will be recalled that brahmins in Puri eat fish and meat. Widows should refrain from eating these. Thus the eating of non-vegetarian food and the drinking of liquor is associated today with enjoyment and merry-making. The fact that these used to be offered to ancestors brings up once again the ambiguity of the ancestors which I remarked on earlier.

The use of the left-hand

Das (ibid.:17–98), in that same analysis of a text on domestic ritual, has shown that the left-side is consistently associated with oblations to the ancestors. Her text does not include funeral ceremonies, but from what informants told me, the left-side predominates in these also. For example, the inverse circumambulation—which is done by the officiant at the end of the ritual—is a feature of the ceremonies at the cremation ground. The eldest son circumambulates the pyre in the inverse direction, keeping his left shoulder towards it. Srinivas make the same observation among the Coorgs (1952:73) and so does Kaushik in her analysis of the funeral ceremonies in Benares (1976).

Inverse sexual union (biparita rati)

In the *mantra* invoking the goddess at the beginning of the Great Worship, Kāḷī is described as residing in the cremation ground, standing on the corpse of Śiva and doing 'inverse sexual union'. The motif of the wife having sexual intercourse with the corpse of her husband in the cremation ground is mentioned in a Sanskrit text on the funeral ceremony. The relevant verse—from the Sūtras of Bharadvāja (1.5.14)—is as follows: 'The uniting of the wife (with the deceased) and other rites should optionally be performed at this stage.'[12] This verse occurs just after the verse which says that the deceased husband has been placed on the pyre. The Sanskrit word for 'uniting' is *samveśanādi*; *samveśana* means coition, sexual union and *ādi* means etc.[13] It would appear then that this iconography of Kāḷī, which is widespread in Orissa and Bengal, has its historical roots in the funeral ceremony.

The use of the left-hand, of reverse circumambulation and of the iconography of inverse sexual union all seem to confirm what one of my *pūjā paṇḍā* friends told me, namely that 'at funerals we do everything in reverse (*ultā*)'. Inverse sexual union cannot be fitted in a right/left dichotomy or any other spatial dichotomy. It is characterized by being simply the opposite of normal, life-producing, sexual intercourse.

The term baḷi

This word can also mean animal sacrifice. But it is not necessarily a non-vegetarian offering. This is what Veena Das writes about the term: 'The sacrificial food offered to the gods is known as *agya* while the sacrificial food offered to ancestors is known as "*piṇḍa*" or "*baḷi*"

(1977:100). She however makes a distinction between benevolent deities in whose worship the right side predominates and other deities who are worshipped in the course of ancestor worship: 'these are usually deities who inspire terror and are explicitly associated with death, such as Rudra' (ibid.:99). The deities in the ritual to which *baḷi* is offered and who are obviously connected with death are: ghosts, she-jackals who roam in the cremation ground, Mahākāḷa who is represented as a corpse and Dakṣinakāḷīkā who is doing inverse sexual union in the cremation ground. It is possible that the other deities, namely Ganeś, Baṭuka, the guardians of the field, are also associated with death and/or ancestor worship but I am not able at this point to show this. The *yoginīs* are the attendants of the goddess Dakṣinakāḷīkā and thus can also be connected with death.

The term *piṇḍa* is not used in either the SPB or the MSV. However, the food which is offered to the goddess and the one eaten by the men and women who join the ritual towards the end is held in the hand and mixed with wine. This gesture is the gesture done by one who offers *piṇḍas* to his ancestors. He mixes ground rice or other flour with water in his hands, thus forming small globules of food. The food offered in the daytime worship is not offered in this manner; it is not handled, not formed into globules, but placed from the cooking pots onto plates. It is not called either *baḷi* or *piṇḍa* but *atikā* or *annadāna*.

The entrance into the circle (cakra prabésa)

This circle, it will be recalled, is the 'circle of the clan' (*kuḷa cakra*). During the ancestor worship one offers oblation to a subset of this clan, namely one's lineal ancestors along with their wives up to three, five, or seven generations. The offerings are offered in order of seniority, the furthest ancestor and his wife being worshipped first.

The men who join the circle are called *bīra* (Sanskrit *vīra*) which is generally translated as 'hero'. Monier–Williams' Sanskrit dictionary gives as other meanings of this word the following: 'male child, son, male progeny'. The root *bīr* is the same as that in *bīrjya* meaning 'semen'. The term can thus refer to a line of sons, the continuity of which is preserved in the semen which is what characterizes the line of ancestors. Among the Coorgs the same word *bīra* refers to ancestors who have died a violent death (Srinivas 1952:160).

The fact that these *bīras* enter the circle of the lineage accompanied by their feminine counterparts—the *śaktis*-—and that they sit in order

of seniority and then are worshipped by the officiant, also in order of seniority, makes it very hard not to draw a parallel between these actions and ancestor worship. Furthermore, these men and women are offered liquor, meat and fish by the officiant, which they make into globules by mixing the food with the wine in their hand and then proceed to eat using an expression which is also used when feeding the ancestors: *tarpaña*.

I propose that the entrance into the circle can be seen as a living reenactment of the ancestor worship ceremony, with the ancestors and their wives present at one time. This also expresses the collapsing of a time depth representing several past generations into the present. This dissolution of time is expressed in the last *mantra* recited by the *bīras* and the *śaktis* as they are drinking the last—fifth—round of wine. In this *mantra* the pot-stand is imagined to be the snake Basukī and the wine the water of the seven seas. The reference is to the myth of the churning of the milk ocean where the churning rope is the snake Basukī. Thus the content of the pot is likened to the original undifferentiated water—*pralaya*—before the churning, before auspicious and inauspicious time began. I must make it clear that this interpretation is my own. Trinayana did not in his clarifications say anything like that. When I asked him who these *bīras* were and why were they worshipped he said that this worship is a kind of *samskāra* needed by these persons; that the *bīras* were followers, disciples of the officiant.

Generally the ritual is characterized by a juxtaposition of auspicious and inauspicious symbols, actions and images. The main offering is the same in form as the sixteenfold offering in the main temple. That offering is auspicious but it is followed by offerings in which inauspicious motifs are predominant. I already discussed such a juxtaposition in the case of the manner and form of the sexual intercourse between the officiant and the *śakti*.

Another mode of expressing the dissolution of time in this ritual is the transformation of the officiant into an androgyne. This is expressed by the fact that after the preparation of the Śrī Pātra with all the five m's in it plus the menstrual blood, the officiant drinks of it. He, by this action, incorporates within himself the female secretions and it is after this that he becomes 'filled with *brahman*'. The fact that this action has as an effect to transform the officiant's body is expressed by the fact that shortly after it he dresses like a house-wife. By drinking from the Śrī Pātra, the officiant adds the female secretion to

the male seed that he has kept within himself—remember, he has not ejaculated. Needless to say, such an action is unheard of in normal intercourse. By such an action he becomes an androgyne thus reminding one of the iconography of Śiva half-man/half-woman.

It is possible to postulate that by such symbolic manipulations the officiant dissolves time, which enables him to be above normal time and thus to undo actions that have taken place in time.

At the end of the ritual the officiant drinks up the rest of the Śrī Pātra, after the men and women have finished the content of their wine pots and have eaten the food. None of the content of the pots is left over. Everything is consumed. This is also as in ancestor worship where the food offered to the ancestors is not distributed afterwards as left-overs or 'grace' (*praśād*) but is thrown into the tank or river.

Let us return now to the dance of the devadasi at the time of the morning meal offering. In the *śākta* tradition it is called the 'leavings of Kāḷī or Śakti' (Kāḷī or Śakti *ucchiṣṭa*). Such an interpretation reinforces the association between the dance of the devadasi and food, since the word *ucchiṣṭa* refers to the food left-over, in this case by the deities. Trinayana explained to me that these leavings of Kāḷī were the drops of female sexual fluid that were secreted from the vagina of the devadasi as a result of the movements that she performs during the dance. In fact he insisted that the sole meaning and purpose of this dance was the production of this sexual fluid, the fifth m, which he called the 'nectar of the *kuḷa*' (*kuḷāmruta*). Thus we have here an equation between food (*Kāḷī ucchiṣṭa*) and fertility. The wife is the feeder of both the living portion of the *kuḷa* and of its dead members, i.e. the ancestors. She is the one who cooks the food which is to be offered to the ancestors and this function is considered as crucial. An unmarried man or a widower cannot make offerings to the ancestors. He has no wife to feed them. In other words, in cooking for the ancestors, the wife's role as both a life maintainer (by cooking) and a line maintainer (by producing a son) is expressed. This whole nexus of feeding the ancestors and fertility expresses itself in the term *piṇḍa*. This word has several meanings. We have already encountered it as referring to the balls of food offered to the ancestors. In Hindu medical texts the same word is used to designate the unshaped embryo (Wendy O'Flaherty 1978:160). It also means 'body'. As I reported earlier, the wife is understood to feed the embryo which has been placed in her womb, with her blood. Thus she is the feeder of the embryo, called *piṇḍa* and she is also the feeder

of the ancestors by cooking food which is then formed into balls called *piṇḍas*. A ghost (*preta*) has no body; the transformation of the ghost into an ancestor is achieved in the ritual on the twelfth day of the funeral ceremonies which is called *sapiṇḍīkarana*. In order to achieve this transformation the *preta* must be given a transitory body. This is accomplished in the ten days following cremation: David Knipe describes these rites in the following manner:

> On the first day of death the *yajamāna* [usually the eldest son] bathes and dresses, then creates a single tennis-ball size mass of cooked white rice and, at a quiet place near a river or temple tank . . . places it upon a tiny altar (*vedi*) of loose earth no more than half an inch high. This rice ball represents the *preta* (for example the spirit of the *yajamāna*'s father), endowed only with its briefest, subtlest (*ātivāhika*) body . . . . Most important of all, a small clay cup of water containing sesame seeds (*tila*) is poured out onto the ball. Each day this procedure will be repeated with a single ball of rice as the *preta* on the altar. The cups of water offered, however, increase by one each day until there are ten on the final day. And each day of the rites results in a new portion of the *preta*'s intermediate body . . . on the tenth day of the offerings, the *preta* receives digestive powers so that the sufferings of hunger and thirst now experienced by the 'body of nourishment' duly created may be allayed by continuous offerings of *piṇḍas* and water from the living (1977:115).

In a footnote, Knipe points out the remarkable parallel structure of these rites and those at birth; in each case there are ten days of offerings of rice and sesame, ten being the number of lunar months that elapse from conception to delivery. Thus the *piṇḍa* here representing the ghost of the departed is fed during a symbolic period of time corresponding to pregnancy, just like the embryo is fed during ten (lunar) months in the womb of the mother. At the end of this ten-day period the impurity of the relatives ends. The actual transformation of this *preta* into an ancestor takes place on the twelfth day. The *piṇḍa* representing the departed is cut in three and mixed successively with the *piṇḍas* representing the departed's father, grandfather and great grandfather (Knipe 1977:15).

Thus the process of becoming an ancestor is closely associated with the process of gestation; in both cases the woman is the feeder. In the case of the funeral ceremony she cooks the food that will become the *piṇḍa* of the departed and in the case of pregnancy she feeds with her blood the embryo which is also called a *piṇḍa*.

The ambivalence of Kāḷī expressed in her *mantra* describing her as holding in her two left hands (the death-related side) a severed head

and a sword and in her right hands (the life-related side) showing the fear-not and the boon-granting gesture, can be seen as expressing the fact that the woman, the *śakti* (as Kāḷī is called and as the women who participate in the ritual are also called) holds within herself both the powers of life and death; death being understood as the withholding of food to the ancestors or to the departed ghost, thus preventing it from becoming an establised ancestor, or in the end of a line by the absence of male offspring. The right side along with daytime is associated with life whereas the left side and night is associated with death. An Oriya proverb captures this ambivalent attitude towards women succinctly: 'Beautiful as a picture by day; a cobra by night' (*dinore citrinī, rātire nāgunī*).

In the anthropological literature, the worship of clan goddesses—similar in nature to Kāḷī—has been reported. A. Mayer reports for Central India a secret worship by clan agnates of clan goddesses called Kula Devi or Kula Mata (1973:184–8). Brenda Beck writing about society in Konku says that these goddesses are 'described as a special manifestation of a great goddess of some distant pilgrimage point' (1972:99). A frequently named clan goddess is Ankalamman who was born in heaven as Parvati.[14]

Among the Coorgs the small-pox goddess and the ancestors are both represented by unhewn stones and are both placed—along with the cobra deity—in the ancestor shrine or on an earthen platform during the ancestor propitiation ceremony (Srinivas 1952:161).

The association between such an ambivalent goddess as Kāḷī and Kāḷī-like goddesses and the ancestors brings to mind the ambivalence of the ancestors themselves. I pointed out in Chapter 5 the ambiguity of ancestor worship as to its classification into the auspicious or the inauspicious category. Ancestors are associated both with death and with fertility. Such an ambiguous association is found in a goddess like Kāḷī.

CHAPTER 9

Time Renewed

The largest festival of the year in Puri is a festival of renewal which ushers in the monsoon in June–July. The car festival (*ratha jātrā*), which takes place annually in the month of *āṣāḍha* (June–July), rejuvenates the deities, thereby renewing the kingship, the people and the land. A much enlarged version of the car festival takes place periodically—every twelve years more or less, whenever the extra lunar month which is added to the year in order for the solar and the lunar year to coincide, happens to be the month of *āṣāḍha*. This festival is called the festival of the new body (*naba kalebara*) and at that time the old wooden images are replaced by new wooden images; the old deities 'die' and new ones are 'born'.

In both these rituals, the main actors are those temple servants who stand in a kinship relationship to the deities. These are the *daitās* and the devadasis. The *daitās* are considered to be the 'blood relatives' (*rakta samparka*) of Jagannātha and the devadasis are the wives of Jagannātha. These two categories of temple servants are the only ones who stand in a kin relationship to Jagannātha; all the others are servants, not relatives. Here again, as in the case of the left-hand *śākta* ritual, kinship categories are utilized to communicate about time. The communication, as well as the symbolism, is different. Time is not dissolved but renewed, since what is achieved is a rejuvenation. Rejuvenation entails reversing the normal direction of time in which beings grow older not younger.

These festivals attract hundreds of thousands of pilgrims, mostly from Orissa but also from surrounding provinces. The presence of the king during these rituals is indispensable. He has to do the sweeping of the chariots before they can leave the temple. I witnessed the festival thrice: in 1976, in 1977 when it corresponded to the festival of the new body, and in 1981. When the Gajapati appears and starts climbing the ramp onto the chariot, the immense crowd shouts with one voice 'Victory to the Gajapati!' One certainly receives the

impression at that time, that the Gajapati ideology is not dead and that the kingship and all that it stands for is still very meaningful to a great number of people.

The king is the sacrificer (*jajamāna*) for these festivals as he is indeed for the whole temple. In his capacity of *jajamāna*, the king is the recipient of the fruits (*phala*) of these ritual actions which are the renewal of the prosperity and well-being of the people and the land.

The *daitās* are an interesting and remarkable group of temple servants. Before embarking on a description of the festivals, the *daitās* need to be introduced. Radha, on the occasion of the 1977 festival, told me the following: 'By the *daitās*, the inauspicious works (*amangaḷa kāma*) are done; whatever auspicious work there is, that falls to us. We do the work of the new Jagannātha, they do the work of the old Jagannātha.'

Radha, by this remark, was setting up a neat binary opposition between the *daitās* and inauspiciousness on the one hand and the devadasis and auspiciousness on the other. I was for long seduced by this perfect structuralist pair but eventually realized that Radha's remark was true only in a general sort of way. The *daitās* indeed seem to be associated with inauspiciousness by many. Sahasrakhyi told me the following story about the origin of the inauspicious work of the *daitās*:

> When the temple was made and the consecrating ceremony done, the king and ministers thought that this image of wood will require to be changed from time to time. They thought: 'We do not know how to do this; who will make the images? Who will be in charge?' The king requested the ministers to solve the problem. One of them said: 'Let us get a very beautiful and handsome bull and decorate it with gold and other ornaments and cover its back with rich silk cloths. We will let it roam freely outside and on the bull we will affix a placard with a notice to the effect that whosoever will kill this bull can take all the gold and other costly things on it.' When the people saw the bull, they thought: 'This is Śiva's mount and we cannot kill it, let it roam.' In a village a man came along with his friends and thought: 'If I kill this bull I will get all that gold. Let me kill it with my friends who can keep the secret.' He held the bull and killed it and took all the ornaments as well as the board bearing the notice. The minister had appointed a person to see what would happen and that person informed the minister. The villager and his friends were brought to the king's court. The minister asked him: 'Why did you kill the bull?' And he replied: 'Because of the notice which was written on it.' The king then told him: 'You can do either of two things; either you will do what I will tell you or I will kill you and all your relatives. You have killed that *most*

auspicious [my emphasis] bull, the mount of Śiva, so I want you to be the man in charge of the old images of Jagannātha which are decayed. You must collect new wood, see to it that new images are made and destroy the old images, in the same way that you killed the bull.' The man agreed and asked: 'What will I get for this work?' The king replied: 'You have taken the things off the bull so also you will take the things off Lord Jagannātha.' That man was Swaī Mahāpātra. [The *daitā* in charge of the image of Jagannātha.]

The opposition between auspiciousness on the one hand and death and the *daitās* on the other is given a narrative form in this story. In one action—killing Śiva's auspicious bull—the villager who is a *daitā* is associated both with death and the destruction of something auspicious.

Significantly, there is no mention in this story of the *daitās*' kinship relation to Jagannātha and of their tribal origin. The word in its Sanskrit form *daityā* is usually translated as 'demon' but in Orissa it is used to refer to the tribal inhabitants of the forest (Tripathi 1978:224). The present-day *daitās* are said to be descendants of the tribal chief Viśvabāsu. In the legend of the origins of the cult of Jagannātha, Viśvabāsu was the original worshipper of this deity. In its tribal form it was called Nīlamādhaba and was made of bluish stone. A Hindu king named Indradyumna was instructed in a dream by Viṣṇu to found the cult of Jagnnātha—a form of Viṣṇu—by fetching the image of this deity from the tribal chief. The king sent his brahmin envoy, Vidyāpati, who after various adventures was able to locate the deity. When he was ready to take the deity, it vanished. Being again instructed by Viṣṇu in a dream, Indradyumna had wooden images built by an old carpenter who is said to have been Viṣṇu himself. The carpenter fashioned four roughly hewn wooden images that are now enshrined in the temple of Jagannātha. These are Jaganṇātha, his sister Subhadrā, his elder brother Baḷabhadra and the pillar-shaped Sudarśana. It would seem that the personal relationship between Viśvabāsu and the deity Nīḷamādhaba with time evolved into a kinship relationship between his descendants and the god-king Jagannātha.

There are several myths which link tribals and a sovereign in a kinship relationship. One such myth is the story of the origin of kingship, the birth of the first good king, named Pṛthu.[1] In two versions of this myth retold by O'Flaherty (1976:123, 324), the birth of king Pṛthu is accompanied by the birth of Niṣādas, who are barbarians living in the forests. This myth is, according to O'Flaherty, 'told to explain the origin of kingship' (1976:321). Pṛthu was churned

out of the body of the bad king Vena, who was killed by the sages. In both the Mahābhārata and the Bhāgavata Purāṇa versions the Niṣādas were churned out of Vena's thigh whereas Pṛthu was churned out of his arms or hands. In the caste *purāṇa* of the Modh Brahmans and Modh Baniyas of Gujarat studied by Veena Das (1977:72) the same myth of the birth of king Pṛthu is told and there the Bhilas, a tribal group, are churned out of Vena's *left* hand and Pṛthu was churned out of his *right* hand. O'Flaherty remarks about this that 'sometimes the opposition is between right and left, sometimes between hand and leg, sometimes both, but the opposition is always between upper/dextrous/good and lower/sinister evil' (1976:322).

In some versions of the myth of the churning of the milk ocean (see Long 1976), the demons are on the left side of the mountain Mandara used as the churning stick and the gods are on the right side of it. The same association is also found in the Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā (1.9.3) where it is written that Prajāpati created the gods with the right hand during the day and the demons with the left hand during the night.[2]

Thus in those myths we have the word *daityā* associated with the left and tribals, the Niṣādas and the Bhilas, corresponding to a lower part of the body or to the left, and related consanguinally to the original king Pṛthu. As we saw in the last chapter, the left corresponds to inauspiciousness. As in those myths, the *daitās*, who are descendants of a tribal chief, are related consanguinally to Jagannātha, the sovereign deity of Orissa. The king of Puri is Jagannātha's living incarnation; he is also the patron (*jajamāna*) of both the car festival and the festival of the new body. Thus indirectly the *daitās* are also related to the king just like the devadasis who, as wives of Jagannātha, can consummate their marriage with the king.

Like the devadasis, the *daitās* are restricted in their access to the inner sanctum. They are not forbidden entry into it since they have to touch the deities at the time of these festivals; however, the *daitās* are not allowed to touch the deities at any other time and if they did so, the deities and the temple would have to be purified. When it is their duty to handle the deities, their activities are clearly separated from the rituals of the other temple servants. Before the *daitās* enter the inner sanctum for any of their work, the images of Lakṣmī and Bhūdevī, which stand on both sides of the image of Jagannātha on the dais, are removed by brahmin servants and placed in the storeroom. After the work of the *daitās* is over, the deities and the temple are purified.

The *daitās* form an endogamous group in Puri; they do not intermarry with other temple servants. Their separateness and tribal origins are not expressed in their outward appearance or ways of behaving, in which they do not differ from their Hindu environment. Their special status is reflected in the fact that they are the only group which can bring into the inner sanctum their new-born sons. Infants are otherwise not allowed in the inner sanctum since they might pollute it by their incontinence. Bringing the new-born son to have a viewing (*darśana*) of Jagannātha, replaces for the *daitās* the ceremony of temple dedication. The *daitās* are also called the 'body servants' (*angasebāka*) of Jagannātha since their duties always involve bodily changes and manipulations of the images. These bodily changes are not those daily ministrations such as bathing, dressing, feeding and putting to sleep. They are mainly concerned with illness and death, but also include repairing the images in the event of some damage occurring to them. The *daitās* are excluded from the daily worship.

Another parallel between the *daitās* and the devadasis is their peculiar position in the hierarchy. The *daitās* are said to be descended from the tribals—the *śāoras*, specifically. The term *śāora* or *śabara* is used both to refer to tribals in general, the equivalent of the term *adibāsi* (original dwellers), and to refer to one specific tribal group living in the hills in the southern district of Ganjam. The Puri *daitās* as far as their appearance and way of life are concerned, have nothing in common with the real tribals and cannot be distinguished from their Hindu surroundings. The real tribals, in any case, were not allowed to enter the temple along with the untouchables before 1948 when the latter forcibly gained entry into Jagannātha's temple. The *daitās* live in the same lanes in Puri as other temple servants, including brahmin servants. Thus the *daitās* are classified as tribals but are not treated as tribals.

The *daitās*' association with inauspiciousness is thus evident both in their actions and in the n. :hs relating to them. However, the *daitās* are also the ones who rejuvenate the deities as well as fashion new bodies for them. They seem marked more by ambiguity than by an exclusive association with inauspiciousness. These concerns will be taken up in the interpretation offered following the description of the festivals.

I will first describe the car festival and follow this with the description of the festival of the new body. I find it necessary to describe

both rituals before attempting an interpretation since an understanding of either of them presupposes a knowledge of both. As I said above, the festival of the new body is a much enlarged version of the annual festival of renewal. To understand the annual festival of renewal one must be aware of the role of the *daitās* during the festival of the new body.

Description of the Car Festival (ratha jātrā)

The word *ratha* means chariot; by translating the words *Ratha Yātrā* by 'car festival' I am simply following local usage. The name car festival does not refer only to that portion of the festival in which the deities are taken in three huge chariots to another temple but also to what happens before that moment. The festival starts a fortnight before the pilgrimage journey in the chariots, on the full moon day of the month of Jyeṣṭha (May–June)—which is the last day of that month—with the 'Bathing Festival' (*snāna purnimā*; *purnimā* means 'full moon day'). This festival only lasts one day and is followed by the period of illness. Although the great majority of the pilgrims arrive in Puri on the days preceding the pilgrimage journey, the festival of the bath attracts a smaller but not negligible number of pilgrims.

The bathing festival

On the morning of the bathing festival, after the images of Lakṣmī and Bhūdevī have been removed from the inner sanctum by brahmin temple servants, the *daitās* enter the inner sanctum and lift the images, one by one and take them in a procession, accompanied by the beating of gongs, large decorative umbrellas and fans, to the bathing platform. This platform is located near the outer wall, facing east, in the north-east corner of the outer compound (see diagram in Chapter 6). The platform is raised so that the images placed on it are visible from the street. In fact the location of the platform makes it clear that the images are on public display; they face the main square in front of the temple. Many pilgrims throng the open space in front of the eastern gate as well as the roofs of the houses just opposite the temple. I myself had rented a seat on such a roof, just across from the bathing platform, which afforded me an excellent view. Pilgrims are also allowed around that platform and many perch themselves on top of the compound wall. Once the four wooden images are standing on

this platform, which for the occasion has been shaded with a cloth canopy, the *daitās* along with the *pūjā paṇḍās* and the *simhāris* fetch water which has been stored overnight in a nearby storeroom. This water is placed in 108 pots. It comes from a covered well situated in front of the temple of Sitaḷā, the goddess of fever and pox, near the northern gate of the temple compound (see diagram). The bathing of the deities consists of a veritable drenching. Some of the temple servants climb on the wall at the rear of the bathing platform and pour water on top of the images and some throw water from below. The drenching of the four images occurs simultaneously. The images are discoloured by the water; some of the temple servants collect the water which has run down the images and is blackened by the paint and walk among the crowd which eagerly takes drops of that water as the left-over of the deities. After this bath the pilgrims are allowed on the platform which in an instant is thronged with men and women who all try to touch the images.

Then the platform is cleared of people and the brahmin temple servant who is the representative of the king (called *mudiratha*) or the king himself comes and performs a ritual called 'sweeping' (*cherā-pahānrā*). With a gold-handled broom, this man sweeps the bathing platform, while other (brahmin) temple servants sprinkle it with water and sandal-wood powder.

Then huge masks in the shape of an elephant's head are brought to the platform and fastened on the images. This is called the 'Ganeś dress' (*Ganeś beśa*). These masks actually hide the images entirely. Thus disguised, the deities are offered the regular sixteenfold offering. The curtain, which in normal worship is drawn at the time of the offering so as to hide the inner sanctum from view, is on that day symbolically represented by a thread which is drawn across the front of the platform: This is the only time that cooked food is offered in public. The most visible and dramatic part of this offering is the bringing and setting out of the food. After the three *pūjā paṇḍās*—who are sitting in front of the three main deities, facing north—have offered the fourteen first offerings (see Appendix 1 to Chapter 6 for the list of the sixteen articles of worship) the temple cooks (*suāras*) bring the food. This takes a long time and for about fifteen minutes there is a constant coming and going of the cooks. These wear white napkins over their mouths and some of them over their hair as well to prevent sweat or saliva from polluting the food. They carry the food in earthen pots which are hung on ropes strung to a shoulder pole.

Several pots are stacked on top of each other so that one man can bring as many as six pots. The pots are placed on the floor of the platform within four squares which have been drawn just for this purpose. In addition to the pots, three plates of food are set in front of each of the priests. At that time a devadasi used to dance in the presence of the *rājaguru* at the foot of the stairs leading up to the bathing platform. These stairs are situated on the southern side of the platform and the foot of the stairs is not visible from outside the temple. When I witnessed the festival no devadasi danced; the devadasis told me that when they were still dancing in the temple they used to dance at that time also.

After the offering, the platform is once more made accessible to the public which as before crowd over it. At that time it is late morning and the images are taken back in the same manner as they were brought in to the main temple. They are not returned to the inner sanctum but placed in the corridor which leads from the inner sanctum to the outer sanctum. There they are placed on the floor in a semi-reclining position, propped up by wooden braces.

The period of illness (aṇasara)

The moment the deities are placed on the floor in front of the inner sanctum marks the beginning of the period of illness. During the (dark) fortnight of the deities' illness the gate to the dancing hall is closed. No one but the *daitās* and the Pati Mahāpātra can enter the place where the deities are reclining. The Pati Mahāpātra belongs to the cook division (*suāra*) who are said to be the descendants of the union of the tribal chief's daughter, Lalitā, and king Indradyumna's brahmin envoy Vidyāpati. This man is said to have been asked by the *daitās* to do the offering to the deities during the period of illness. Although the cooks have a mixed descent, they are brahmins, but they do not do the offering in the temple. This is done by the *pūjā paṇḍās*. The Pati Mahāpātra is the only brahmin allowed in the place of illness.

During this dark fortnight, the cooking in the great kitchen of the temple is stopped. All 'auspicious' sounds are also stopped. There is no beating of gongs, no sounding of the trumpet or the conch-shell and the devadasis do not sing and dance. Very few people visit the temple during that time and the temple is silent and deserted.

Although the Pati Mahāpātra is there to do the offering, it is said that the offering is done in 'tribal fashion' (*śabari pūjā*). This means

the following: the *daitās* take up residence in that area and bring raw food such as fruits and milk and milk products. They peel the fruits, taste them first to ascertain if they are ripe and then they offer them to the deities. The peels are not thrown outside but remain on the floor. This is said to be the same type of worship that their ancestor, the tribal chief Viśvabāsu performed in the forest. The *daitās* as the blood relatives of Jagannātha, sleep and eat right there with their kinsmen.

They also administer an herbal medicine which has been prescribed and prepared by the temple doctor (*baidya*). This man is a brahmin and cannot himself enter in the place where the deities are suffering.

Besides offering raw food and medicine, the *daitās* also repair the body of the images. The drenching during the bathing festival discolours and damages the outer cloth covering of the wooden images. These are removed and replaced with new cloth covering which is then covered with a coat of resin and one of paint. When this outer covering is ready, one of the *daitā*—called the *dutta mukha simhāri*—paints the features of the faces of the deities, except for the pupils of their eyes.

On the twelfth day of the dark fortnight, the *daitās* bring to the king in the palace some plates equal in number to that of the family members of the king, on which they have placed some of the old cloth covering of the deities. These are the left-overs (*praśād*) of the deities and they are offered to the king. The king then orders that some saris be brought to the *daitās*. The king first touches these saris which are then given to the *daitās*. The latter then go to the main gate of the palace and there tie the saris around their heads. This tying of the sari is not considered to be the ceremony of 'tying the sari' (*sāḍhi bandhana*) which is the temple dedication ceremony. After tying their saris, the *daitās* go for a viewing (*darśana*) of the king and they stand in front of him with folded hands and bow down. The king instructs them about the car festival and how to manage it and make it run smoothly. It is only after the *daitās* have given these left-overs to the king that they can give the same left-overs to pilgrims, relatives and friends.

On the thirteenth day of the dark fortnight, one of the *daitās* brings in a silver pot some pasted chalk and gum (*khāḍi*) which will constitute the first coat of paint on the images. This will be offered to the king who in turn will again advise the *daitās* as to the smooth running of the festival. From that night, the work of the painter *daitā* starts. This work is finished on the fourteenth day.

On the dawn of the fifteenth day—the new moon day, *amābāsyā*—the period of illness is over and the gate to the dancing hall is opened. Pilgrims—who have already arrived for the pilgrimage journey—flock to the temple for 'the viewing of the new youth' (*naba jaubana darśana*) of the deities. The deities are still reclining on the floor in front of the inner sanctum and are still pupil-less.

The pilgrimage journey (tīrtha jātrā)

After this public viewing the deities and the temple are purified (*mahāsnāna*). After this purification the three *pūjā paṇḍas* of the anthropomorphic deities paint the pupils of the eyes of the three images. This act is called the 'festival of the eye' (*netroścaba*). Once the deities' eyes have been opened so to speak, the representative of the king (*mudiratha*) comes and performs a welcoming ritual (*bandāpanā*).

Once the king, through his representative in the temple, has welcomed the deities in their renewed state, the deities are offered a regular worship. Cooking is resumed in the kitchen and everything proceeds as usual with the important difference that the deities are not reintegrated on their jeweled throne in the inner sanctum but are still reclining on the floor where they just spent a fortnight of indisposition.

The next day, which is the second day of the bright fortnight of *āṣāḍha* (*śukla dvitiyā*), is the beginning of the car festival proper. At dawn the masses of pilgrims all head for the sea to take a purificatory bath. By the time they return to the area in front of the temple, three *śāsan* brahmins are sitting in a pavilion above the main entrance which overlooks the three chariots. There they perform the Vedic fire sacrifice (*homa*) while chanting Vedic verses. This goes on very much on the side and no one pays any attention to this Vedic consecration (*pratiṣṭhā*) of the chariots. The Vedic brahmins then come down and onto the chariots to sprinkle water on the platform where the images will be placed, in order to purify them.

The chariots, which were almost two months in the making, are quite tall structures, the top of the tower-like construction reaching above the walls of the temple compound. The chariots are covered with coloured cloths: red and black in the chariot of Subhadrā, yellow and red in the chariot of Jagannātha and green and red in that of Baḷabhadra (see Pl. 14). Below the platform on which the *daitās* and other temple servants will ride, which stands some fifteen

feet off the ground, are nine niches—about three feet tall—with brightly coloured wooden sculptures of what are called 'side deities' (*pārśva devatā*). The nine images on Jagannātha's car are as follows: (1) Kṛṣṇa holding the mountain Govardhana; (2) Kṛṣṇa on top of the demon Praḷamba; (3) an image of Viṣṇu Nārāyaṇa sitting in the lotus pose and holding his four 'weapons' (mace, discus, conch-shell, and lotus); (4) another image of Nārāyaṇa with eight arms (instead of the four usual ones); (5) a figure of Hanumān, the monkey deity of the Rāmāyaṇa; (6) an image of Nrusingha, the man-lion incarnation of Viṣṇu, with four arms, tearing open a man (Hiranyakaśipu); (7) another image of Hanumān shown with Lakṣmaṇa, Rāma's younger brother; (8) an image of Hari-Hara: half Viṣṇu and half Śiva; (9) an image of Lakṣmaṇa, Rāma and Hanumān.

The images around the car of Baḷabhadra are as follows: (1) Ganeś; (2) Śiva on his bull; (3) an eight-armed Śiva; (4) Lakṣmaṇa on Hanumān; (5) a twenty-two armed Nrushingha; (6) Baḷarāma killing a demon; (7) Baḷarāma; (8) a six-faced image of Brahma riding on the gander; (9) Nārāyaṇa sitting on the serpent Śesanāga.

The nine images around the car of Subhadrā are the following: (1) An eight-armed goddess, Kāḷī, sitting on a corpse; (2) an image of Barāhī, the female boar (Barāha is the boar incarnation of Viṣṇu); (3) Cāmundī, looking terrible with bones strewn around her; (4) Parvatī, four-handed (Śiva's consort); (5) eight-handed Durgā killing the buffalo demon; (6) Kāḷī (?) a goddess with four hands holding the goad, the noose and showing the boon granting and the fear-not gesture; (7) a four-handed Durgā; (8) again Durgā killing the buffalo; (9) Baṇadurgā (Durgā of the forest) showing Kruṣṇa taking a thorn out of her foot.

The long-awaited moment has arrived and the beating of gongs is heard before the procession emerges from within the temple onto the crowded square outside. The police form a cordon to press back the crowd. The wooden pillar Sudarśana is the first to be brought out. Before being carried up the ramp to the platform of the chariot of Subhadrā, it is made to circumambulate it three times at a run. Then Baḷabhadra is brought out, then Subhadrā and lastly Jagannātha. This is a highly colourful and dramatic moment. A group of twenty or so temple servants actually carry the image. The *daitās* and the cooks (*suāras*) holding the images themselves and the *pūjā paṇḍās* and the *simhāris* holding on to thick silk ropes tied to the images, both in front and in back. The images are decorated with large fan-like flower

headdresses which rock back and forth as the men give a slow rocking gait to the deities (this gait is called *pahaṇḍi*). In the front of the images two rows of men from the bell-metal caste (*kansāri*) bare torsoed and their waist adorned with bright red sashes, loudly and rythmically beat on gongs while with each beat they thrust their bodies forward. The procession is accompanied by umbrella bearers, large fan (*torānas*) bearers and men blowing conch-shells and trumpets. Carrying the huge images up the rather steep and uneven ramp to the chariot is no small task and the crowd cheers the efforts of the *daitās* and the *paṇḍās*. Then the *mahājanas* (brahmin servants in charge of movable images) bring the representative images of Jagannātha, namely Mādan Mohan and of Baḷabhadra namely Rāmakṛuṣṇa, onto the chariots of Jagannātha and Baḷabhadra respectively.

Once the deities are properly placed on the chariots everyone waits for the arrival of the king. He is carried from the palace some 100 yards down on the main road, in a vehicle called a *tāmjān* which is an ornamented chair carried by men (see Pl. 11). He is followed by the palace elephant. The *rājagurus*, agnates, and some feudatory kings accompany him on foot to the chariots. As they ascend the ramp, shouts of *Jay Gajapati*! (Victory to the Gajapati) surge from the pilgrims. The *rājagurus* hand the king a gold-handled broom and the king walks all around the platform three times; once sweeping it (*cherāpahānrā*) and twice sprinkling it with perfumed water. He does this on all the three chariots in the same order as the one in which the deities were brought out. The king returns to the palace in the same manner that he came.

After this ritual the ramps are removed and a team of wooden horses are attached to the front of each chariot. Then a large wooden charioteer is placed on the left side of the platform. The ropes—four to each chariot—are then fastened. The moment that everyone has been eagerly waiting for is approaching. The signal to pull the cars is given by a man, called the car caller (*ratha dāhuka*) who is perched on the front of each chariot and holds a long cane. When he calls loudly out to the crowd, everyone reaches for the ropes. This man shouts out obscenities to the people, challenging them to show their strength and the people laughingly respond.

As the first chariot, that of Baḷabhadra, slowly starts moving, the gong players arrayed in the front of the platform start their loud rythmic beating. The *daitās* and the other temple servants sit or stand around the images. The huge wheels (as many as sixteen of them)

made of wood creak and the chariot moves making a strange roaring noise. From the crowd all kinds of things are thrown onto the chariot. Coconuts come crashing and split open; bananas and mangoes also fly through the air and if aimed right land on the chariot. Money, even jewelry and watches are also thrown from the crowd.

The journey to the Guṇḍicā temple, some two miles down the road, is interrupted by pauses during which large baskets of raw food are brought in front of the chariots and offered to the deities. The food is sent by monasteries (*matha*) and by some wealthy private persons as well.

The chariot of Jagannātha, which is the last to leave, makes a stop which the other two chariots do not make. It stops at a temple about mid-way between the Guṇḍicā temple and the main temple. That temple is called the temple of mother's sister (*māusi mā*). The name of the goddess enshrined there is Arddhāśinī meaning 'half the ocean'. The priest of that temple offers Jagannātha fried cheese cakes.

When the three cars have reached Guṇḍicā the images are not immediately taken out, but the cars remain until an auspicious hour has been set for the transfer of the deities in that temple. Each time that I witnessed the festival the deities remained on the chariots for about twenty-four hours. Pilgrims settle in around the chariots and chant prayers, offer lamps, fruits or incense, clamber up on the chariots to touch the deities. The *daitās* and other temple servants sit on the chariots and help the pilgrims climb on. The atmosphere is relaxed and suffused with devotion.

While the deities are on the chariots in front of Guṇḍicā temple, the *pūjā paṇḍās* make offerings of dry, raw food (*sukhila bhoga*). This food consists mainly of raw flattened rice (*cuḍa*) mixed with grated coconut and unprocessed brown sugar (*ghur*). Fruits are also offered. The offering is done in the sixteenfold manner as in the temple. The *daitās*, although they do not perform the offering, are around during the work of the *pūjā paṇḍās*. They sit on the chariots but do not touch the food.

The stay in Guṇḍicā temple

The deities are carried inside this temple in the same way that they were carried outside the main temple. The Guṇḍicā temple has no image installed in its inner sanctum and is used only during this festival.

After the deities have been placed in the inner sanctum and the

daitās have left, the temple is purified and the deities are given a purification bath. The *daitās* will not play any role during the seven days that the deities will stay in that temple. Food is cooked in the temple of Guṇḍicā and is offered as usual by the *pūjā paṇḍās*. The ritual day in that temple is the same as that in the main temple. The devadasis resume their rituals, both at the morning meal offering and at the evening putting-to-sleep ceremony. The only difference with the daily worship in the main temple is that the deities' daily morning bath (*abakāśa*) is more elaborate. The deities are rubbed with sandalwood paste all over their bodies (*sarbānga candan lāgi*). Huge quantities of sandal paste are supplied by one of the monasteries in Puri for this purpose.

On the fifth day of the bright fortnight—which corresponds to the second day of the deities' stay in Guṇḍicā—there takes place a very interesting interlude which involves Lakṣmī and the devadasis. In 1977 three devadasis—Amrapalli, Radha and Bisaka—participated in that ritual, which I was able to observe. Lakṣmī, who as we will recall has been left behind, is taken out from the main temple in a palanquin carried by brahmin temple servants. The procession includes torch bearers—since this takes place in the middle of the night—a gong beater, a conch blower and the devadasis of the outer division, who walk on the left side of Lakṣmī's palanquin. The procession walks at a rather brisk pace to the Guṇḍicā temple and stops in front of the chariot of Jagannātha. There the palanquin is placed on wooden stands and a brahmin temple servant conducts a short worship of Lakṣmī. He offers flowers, incense, perfume, lamp and food. In between each offering another temple servant pours water over his hands. When this is over the devadasis sing a song called the Herā Pañcami song after the name of this ritual (Herā Pañcami means 'the seeing fifth' when Lakṣmī goes to see her husband on the fifth day). The song sings the anger of Lakṣmī who has been left behind by her husband. While they sing, the devadasis approach a man, who turns out to be Swaī Mahāpātra, the *daitā* in charge of the image of Jagannātha. They all bend down and take a hold of the end of his *dhoti* (lower garment) and pull on it as if to tear it, while singing the following song:

Lakṣmī with a heavy heart called on her friend Bimalā.
You have calmed me. My husband's sister has given me a lot of sorrow.
How much will I bear! You know all the past stories.
It is oppressively hot; in between them the yellow-faced one [Subhadrā] is coming.

Looking down, not lifting her face, her body desires cold water.
Her words are always heeded by her brother.
At that moment she came out of the house and arrived at the bathing platform.
She poured on herself old water mixed with water from a pilgrimage place [*tīrtha jaḷa*] as much as she liked.
The water penetrated on the head of the Lord and of all three.
After the food offering was finished there, they arrived at the steps of the platform.
Praśād was given and *bandāpanā* was done, the Lord came slowly, slowly.
Entering the dance hall He came to the Kaḷāsteps [by the gate to the outer sanctum].
Before entering the room, he took a hold of my hand, and pointed to his head [a gesture indicating he has a headache].
His body being so very tired, he could not speak; at one place the three remained.
They cannot get up, they cannot sit; Daśārathī [another name of Jagannātha] is very tired.
After 15 days they pick up their bodies and after that they open their eyes.
One after another, they communicate to each other by gestures and the night is gone.
The *dāsīs* said: The Lord riding the car went to *baḷagaṇḍi* [area of Māusi Mā temple].
The *sebākas* of the body, the strong *daitās*
Took him away from Nīḷācala,
Those people used to be with me.
Everybody has taken my Lord away.
No one is with me, I am the enemy of all the Lord's servants.
Bimalā said: 'Oh dear friend, listen.'
'I will tell you a secret.
You take from me this magical dust;
Mix camphor with it and throw it.
Looking at your face the Lord Jagabandhu [friend of the world] will be happy.'
After this was said Lakṣmī came out.
Surrounded by all the women, she came out.
Waving the fly-whisk, all the friends took her.
The daughter of the sea came out in a fighting mood.
This mother will punish everyone and smash the three cars.
From there the goddess sallied forth.
She entered the palace of Guṇḍicā.
She broke the car and beat the black backs [the builders of the cars].
The mother tore the garment of the gajapati.
Having broken the car she went to meet Lord Jagannātha.

After this song the palanquin with Lakṣmī on it is taken around the car of Jagannātha and one of the devadasis breaks off a small piece of wood on it. The group then proceeds inside the temple of Guṇḍicā (which is also closed to non-Hindus so I had to remain outside and send P. C. Mishra inside). Inside the temple, the devadasis remain in the audience hall while Lakṣmī is taken into the inner sanctum. There one of the brahmin servants throws the powder that was secured from the temple of Bimalā before Lakṣmī set out from the main temple. As the song says, this magic dust, once thrown in Jagannātha's face, will make him want to return to Lakṣmī. The deity's response to the dust thrown in his face is indicated by his being slightly pushed forward by one of the priests. While this is going on in the inner sanctum, the devadasis in the audience hall sing again the song of Herā Pañcami. Then Lakṣmī is returned to the main temple and the devadasis go home.

The day after Herā Pañcami, in the morning three *pūjā paṇḍās* take three 'garlands of order' from the deities (*āgyāmāḷa*) and place these garlands on the three chariots. From that moment the three chariots are turned around to face south in the returning direction. This must be accomplished within three days.

The return journey (bahuḍa jātrā)

On the tenth day of the bright fortnight of this same month (*śukla daśami*) the deities start their return journey (*bahuḍa jātrā*). Exactly the same series of events take place that happened during the first journey. The deities are taken out in procession, lifted onto the chariots, the king sweeps the chariots and the pilgrims pull them. It was during one of the pauses on the return journey that I clambered onto the chariot of Jagannātha and a *daitā* enthusiastically and forcefully bent my head so it touched the deity's feet.

The chariot of Jagannātha makes a stop in front of the king's palace. There takes place what is called 'the meeting of Lakṣmī and Nārāyaṇa' (*Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa bheṭa*). The statue of Lakṣmī is carried from the storeroom in the main temple by brahmin servants, to a pavilion placed on top of the outer compound wall on the eastern side, called 'the gazing pavilion' (*cāhāṇi maṇḍapa*, see diagram in Chapter 6). Lakṣmī is accompanied by her *dāsīs*, the devadasis. From that pavilion Lakṣmī gazes at the chariot of Jagannātha parked in front of the palace. While there the devadasis sing a song called the *Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa bheṭa* song:

Bimalā came running quickly in front of the daughter of the ocean to inform her.
'Listen carefully mother of the great world; The most important god is returning.
With my help you were able to do this.'
'Oh Dāsīs, when god has arrived, in my palace the people will celebrate.
Going into many houses, spread the news, and place the full vessels at the Lion's gate.
Place mango leaves on the branches of the Narakoli tree [auspicious tree].
Place plantain trees all around and tie flags on all the roofs of the temple.
Take care to decorate the whole city and stretch strings of pearls in the city.
Fix the multicoloured canopy and then wave the fly-whisk.
Arrange for the beginning of the food offering; when He comes then close the door.
We will find out how he manages to come. The Lord left me and gave me pain.
He should not come in the house. In the festival he has taken his sister.'
Speaking like this the goddess came out and the daughter of the sea circumambulated the chariot.
'I broke the chariot, I beat the black backs and Prabhu is nonetheless coming to Nīlāgiri?
Oh yellow faced mother! because of your affection this has happened.'
After this the *dāsīs* speak: 'near the Lion's gate the chariot is seen.'
Hearing this the whole body was filled with joy and this mother claps her hands.
'Dāsīs, quickly go and see his return from the journey.'
The goddess came from inside to the Bheṭa pavilion [the pavilion situated on the edge of the eastern wall overlooking the road] and stayed on it.
Bending over the banister, mother gazed at the three chariots.
Mother asked: 'Where is the chariot of the dearest of my life?'

Lakṣmī is then carried in a palanquin from the temple to the palace. The devadasis accompany her. When Lakṣmī's palanquin has left the temple, news is sent to the king who sets out on foot along with the two *rājagurus* and an entourage consisting of some agnates and (erstwhile) feudatory kings. The king meets Lakṣmī's palanquin about midway between the palace and the temple. He takes hold of the right side of Lakṣmī's palanquin—keeping the goddess on his left—and walks towards the chariot of Jagannātha. When the small procession arrives in front of the chariot, the king lifts the small statue of Lakṣmī above his head and makes her face the statue of Jagannātha on the chariot (see Pls. 15 and 16). After replacing her on the palanquin, still holding on to it, the king and his entourage come

close to the chariot where the *daitās* of Jagannātha hand to the *rājagurus* the 'garland of order' of the deity and the *rājagurus* give it to the king. After this the king, still holding onto Lakṣmī's palanquin, circumambulates Jagannātha's chariot once. The circumambulation ends right by the palace gate, where the king and his entourage for a moment stand facing the crowd so as the people may have a last *darśan* of the king (see Pl. 17).[3] The statue of Lakṣmī is returned to the temple.

The chariot of Jagannātha then is pulled to the main temple. There, a sixteenfold offering of raw dry food is done by the *pūjā paṇḍās* on the three chariots. On the evening of the eleventh day (*ekādasi*, especially sacred to Viṣṇu) a special offering is given. It is called 'the lip milk drink' (*adhāra poṇā*). This drink, made of milk, cheese and bananas, is placed in huge earthen wares which reach up to the lips of the images, hence the name. The drinks are offered by the *pūjā paṇḍās* in a fivefold worship, after which the jars are broken and the liquid runs all over the chariots and onto the ground. The pilgrims jostle each other to catch some of the liquid which they drink as *praśād*. This offering is said to be for the *yoginīs*, who are the attendants of Kālī.

The deities are then given what is called 'the golden dress' (*sunā beśa*). To their unfinished arms and legs are affixed solid gold forearms and hands as well as feet. On their heads golden crowns are placed and they are adorned with gold jewelry. When the deities are so bedecked, the throng of pilgrims circumambulate the three chariots, forming a veritable human river. It is a high point in the pilgrims' journey, for to have a view of this golden dress is considered particularly auspicious.

After the gold has been removed, some two hours later, the deities are taken back inside the temple, in the same fashion as they were taken out. When the images of Sudarśan, Baḷabhadra and Subhadrā are in the audience hall and the statue of Jagannātha is just being lowered down the ramp from his chariot, the small statue of Lakṣmī is carried in the hands of the *mahājanas* from the storeroom to the 'meeting pavilion' accompanied by the devadasis. After Lakṣmī has been replaced in the inner sanctum, the devadasis remain in that portion of the temple.

When the image of Jagannātha has reached the audience hall, the other three images are already in the inner sanctum. The devadasis close Jaya Bijaya Duāra, which is the gate leading from the audience

hall onto the outer sanctum. The devadasis are on the inside and the *daitās* with Jagannātha are in the audience hall. A song dialogue takes place between the devadasis and the *daitās*. The devadasis are those of the inner division. Now the ritual is done only by Brundabati. She gave me a lively report of this dialogue which quite obviously she had great fun in doing. The tone of voice in which the dialogue is enacted is loud and lusty. The first two verses are recited in Sanskrit but then both devadasis and *daitās*, whose main spokesman is Swaī Mahāpātra, shift to a very colloquial Oriya. According to Brundabati, Swaī Mahāpātra first recites a verse in Sanskrit which she was either unwilling or unable to give me. But the same thing is then repeated in Oriya and simply says: 'Oh Dāsīs, are you there? Open the door!' The devadasi replies in Sanskrit (but she gave me only the Oriya version): 'Have you forgotten the road? This is not Guṇḍicā temple. How have you come here? In Guṇḍicā you had singing and dancing and young women, here there is nothing. This is the dwelling of a housewife (*gruhiṇī*). This is the house of 'one who suffers from separation' (*birahiṇī*). It is better for you to return to that Guṇḍicā place.' Then follows the song dialogue in Oriya. The full text was given to me by Amrapalli who wrote it down for me. I then got from a *daitā* the written version of their lines and was able to verify that they were the same as those given to me by Amrapalli. The song dialogue is as follows:

Dev. From now on listen to the story.
The daughter of the sea went in.
Happily flowers were thrown
And the fly-whisk was waved.
She entered in the temple
And sat on the beautiful bed.
Smiling Śrīyā [Lakṣmī] said:
'Today my husband's sister will come to the house.
Prepare a drink with cold water.
She comes all blossomed, and will give you road money.'
Laughing she says:
'Our house sister will be angry.'
Shortly the *dāsīs* go and inform her
That Prabhu is coming in procession.
In the arch of the audience hall
The Lord's image faces south.
Hulāhuli is heard.
The king of Lanka bows his head.

First Baḷarāma entered without fear,
Behind comes Subhadrā hiding.
They are seated on the jeweled throne
And the dāsīs watching the door, hook it closed.
A noise was heard
From all the gathered dasis.
The supreme Lord of the infinite egg of Brahma
Cannot come in even though he is at the door.

Da. We are returning from a pilgrimage journey
Because of this you are examining me?
The Lord is calling.
Dāsīs, open the door, we will go inside.

Dev. If you have gone on a pilgrimage journey
Why haven't you [familiar form] taken your wife along?
She has honour and she is brave
This princess is your first wife.
She is the one with the auspicious signs.
What were you thinking when you took your sister?
You took the rice pounder and the vegetable cutter and so forth;
You gave pain to our Mistress.
Because of the pain of separation our Mistress is getting thin.
How unkind and cruel, Oh Life of the world!
We won't open the door.
Go back to the Guṇḍicā house.

Da. Oh dear *dāsīs* we went on a journey
And seeing our sister, we took her along.
Along with us brother Baḷarāma went;
How could I take my wife along?
It is not the custom.
Outside my servants are getting wet.

Dev. At the marriage of the daughter of Baruna
Folding your hands bravely you took an oath.
'We will never leave Lakṣmī even for a moment.
I will forgive all her faults.'
You have promised to do thus;
Śrī Jagannātha you have broken your promise.

Da. Dāsīs, we speak the truth and not lies;
We do not keep company with untruthful persons.
Are these words to be spoken to me?
Our golden Lakṣmī sits in my heart.
Oh my darling how unkind and cruel is your heart.

Dev. One *dāsī* comes forward and says:
Oh little Jaguṇi [familiar diminutive of Jagannātha] how you shout!

Our mistress has gone to sleep.
Who will dare go and tell her?
Da. The husband of Śrī is smiling.
'You talk very well, young maids.
Go inform her and open the door.
Dear *dāsīs*, I have brought back so many different silks.
Please speak in my favor.
Dāsīs, we love you very much.'

At the end of this dialogue, the devadasi unhooks the gate and she exits through the southern gate which is a side entrance to the outer sanctum.

Jagannātha is brought in the inner sanctum and placed on the dais. After the purificatory rites are carried out, normal temple worship resumes; this is initiated by Lakṣmī being replaced on the dais to the left of her Lord. Thus reunited with his wife, the Lord's pilgrimage is at an end.

The Festival of the New Body (Naba Kalebara)

I will give only a brief summary of this festival which is described in great detail by G. C. Tripathi (1978). I was not able to observe the forest rituals which take place during two months preceding the bathing festival. When this festival was last held in 1977, I arrived in Puri shortly after the bathing festival.

Rituals in the Forest

The festival starts sixty-five days before the bathing festival, on the tenth day of the bright fortnight of the month of *caitra* (Mar.–Apr.). On that day a party of twenty-one *daitās*, the Pati Mahāpātra and five *śāsan* brahmins including the *rājagurus* set out on foot for the village of Kakatpur some sixty kilometres, north-west of Puri. Before setting out the *rājagurus* have received a betel nut from the king—the patron (*jajamāna*) of this festival—delegating authority to them.

In Kakatpur the party goes to the temple of Goddess Mangaḷā who has a large temple there. The brahmins sleep in that temple whereas the *daitās* remain in a monastery in the village. The party has brought *mahāpraśād* from Puri and the brahmins offer it to the goddess and perform her worship. The brahmins will sleep in the goddess' temple until one of them receives from her in a dream information as to the location of the trees which will become the new logs.[4] Once it has

received this information the party sets out in search for the trees which must bear special signs. For example, the tree for the image of Jagannātha should have on it the sign of the discus (*cakra*) and the conch-shell (*śankha*), be near an anthill, a cremation ground, a river or pond and a Śiva temple. This is rather unusual for an image of Viṣṇu but not so unusual when it is realized that Jagannātha can also be Kāḷī.

At the site of the tree a short worship of it takes place; it is circumambulated, purified and smeared with sandalwood paste and red powder, and flowers are offered to it. A temporary structure with a thatch roof is then erected near it and a fire altar is made. The brahmins perform Vedic fire sacrifices in it; these are called the 'forest sacrifices' (*baṇayāga*) and they last for three days. Other thatch-roofed structures are erected where members of the party sleep at night. The group of shelters is called the 'settlement of the *śabaras*' (*śabara palli*).

On the third day the tree is cut, the first symbolic strike being given with a gold axe by a brahmin temple servant, then with the same axe by the *rājaguru*, who is the representative of the king, and then with a silver axe by the leader of the *daitās*. The actual cutting down of the tree is accomplished by carpenters (*mahāraṇa*) with iron axes. The main trunk is pared of its branches and roughly hewn. A wodden cart is constructed which is pulled by people all the way back to Puri. All the four logs are in the main temple before the time of the bathing festival.

Rituals in the Temple

On the day of the bathing festival both the new logs and the old images are placed on the bathing platform. After the drenching and the other rituals on the platform, the old images are taken back to the main temple and placed on the floor of the corridor in front of the inner sanctum. The new logs are taken on the northern side of the outer compound. This place is called Koili Vaikuṇṭha and is the burial place of the old images (see diagram in Chapter 6). There two temporary structures have been erected. The logs are placed in one of them and will remain there for the next fortnight while the *daitās* carve the 'skeleton' of the new images out of them. The other structure is the site of Vedic fire sacrifices and of the 'establishment' rites (*pratiṣṭha*) of the images which includes an *abhiṣeka* ceremony. This is accomplished on a piece of wood called the *nyāsā dāru* which,

after having received from the Vedic brahmins the Vedic installation *mantra*, will be cut into four pieces by the *daitās*. These pieces will be used later to plug the central cavity which is made in the images and which contains the 'soul' or 'immortal life substance' (*brahma-padārtha*) of the deities.

Thus the Vedic rites and the carving of the images are conducted simultaneously in two separate structures. These rites are carried out in great secrecy and no outsider is allowed to witness them.

The work of the *daitās* during the first fortnight in the temporary structure must not only not be seen by anyone but the sounds made by the *daitās* while giving shape to the logs must not be heard by anyone either. The belief is that anyone who hears this sound will become blind and deaf and his progeny will die. Thus to cover these sounds the devadasis are required to sit outside the structure all day singing auspicious songs.[5] They are not allowed inside the structure and are all this time kept separate from the *daitās*.

The carving of the images and the rites of 'installation' of the brahmins are both over by the fourteenth day of the dark fortnight. The *nyāsā dāru* is circumambulated seven times around the temple by the brahmins and then given to the *daitās* who cut it up in four pieces. The next day, the day of the new moon, after circumambulating the temple thrice, the new images are brought to the same place where the old images are reclining on the floor, in front of the inner sanctum. That night, in the middle of the night, all the lights in the temple are extinguished. Only the *daitās* remain in the temple. The oldest among them is left with the images. He is blindfolded and his hands and forearms are wrapped in cloths so that he can neither see nor feel the 'immortal life substance' which in utter darkness and silence he extracts from the central cavity of the old images and places in the corresponding cavity of the new images. People say that this man will die within the year. After this is accomplished the other *daitās* hack the old images to pieces and carry them to the burial ground in the northern side of the outer compound. There they dig a very deep hole and throw the pieces in it. After having done that they all go to Markandeya tank, to the north-west of the temple, and take a bath. This bath inaugurates a period of ten days of death impurity during which the *daitās* do not shave; they fast and mourn; they cry and lament. On the tenth day they perform the purificatory works (*śuddhi kriyā*). They go to the same tank and after being shaved by the barber, they take a bath. They also purify their houses by

whitewashing and spreading lime and break all the earthen wares in the house, which they replace with new ones. In other words they observe all the usual rites performed at the time of death.

The family members of the *daitās*, their wives and children, also observe death pollution rules. The women bathe and wear new clothes on the tenth day. They spread cow dung in their houses to purify them. They keep a pot of water with turmeric in it at the entrance of the house which is used by the *daitās* when they wash their feet returning from their bath in the tank.

On that day the *daitās* give a feast for some brahmins. On the thirteenth day they sponsor an enormous feast to which all the temple servants, the members of the Mukti Maṇḍapa, the *rājagurus*, important people, temple administrators etc. are invited. In 1977 I was told that 10,000 people were fed by the *daitās* in the temple. They have a special fund for this feast to which the government contributes.

In the funeral observances of the *daitās* they do not require the services of any brahmins. There is no rite of *sapiṇḍikaraṇa* and therefore no need of a brahmin. This is understandable since Jagannātha does not become an ancestor, but is immediately 'reborn'.

The *daitās* as the heirs of the deceased persons are given what the deities were wearing: clothes, jewelry, etc. . . . (Nowadays the temple administration gives the *daitās* a sum of money instead of those articles.) The *daitās* keep cloth strips, resin and other such materials from the old images which after having first given some portion to the king, they then sell the rest to the pilgrims. These are very much sought after.

During the period of the death impurity of the *daitās*, nothing happens in the temple. In fact this period lasts until the end of the bright fortnight which started after the burial of the images. Activity resumes on the first day of the dark fortnight (after the full moon which is the last day of the intercalary month of *āṣāḍha*).

During the dark fortnight of the regular month of *āṣāḍha*, the *daitās* cover the wooden 'skeleton' of the new images with coverings of cloth, thread, gum, resin, and chalk to give them their final shape.[6] This corresponds to the period of illness in the car festival. From then on the festival proceeds in the same manner as the car festival.

Interpretation

Let me first discuss the last festival described, namely the festival of

the new body, since an understanding of this ritual will serve as a background for an understanding of the annual festival. What follows is not a detailed discussion of every phase of that ritual but rather of its salient features, those that bear on the concerns of this work.

Of central importance to our argument is that the *daitās* observe death pollution and the devadasis do not. The reason given for the *daitās'* death pollution observances is that they belong to the same clan as Jagannātha. But as we saw in the chapter on kinship, the devadasis have the same *gotra* (clan name) as Jagannātha, and that is to be expected since they are the wives of Jagannātha. Wives belong to the same clan as their husbands; thus on the same kinship grounds as those evoked for the *daitās* the devadasis should also observe death pollution for the deities.[7] The *daitās* are not separated from the deities' inauspicious decay and 'death' whereas the devadasis are.

The 'death' of the deities is of course not a usual one. Their soul is immediately re-embodied in new bodies; these souls do not become, upon being released from the old bodies, 'departed spirits' (*pretas*) which wander around until the descendants have fashioned temporary bodies and eventually have transformed these departed into ancestors. The release of the soul of the deities corresponds to the breaking of the skull by the eldest son in the cremation ground. In both cases this action marks the beginning of the observances of death impurity (see Kaushik 1976). In the case of the 'death' of the deities the funeral observances do not include any *śrāddha* (ancestor propitiation) ceremony for which the services of a brahmin are necessary and that obviously because the deities do not become ancestors. The normal flow of events—death, the release of the soul, the fashioning of a temporary body for the departed and the transformation of the latter into an ancestor—does not take place. Time does not flow forward in the normal manner. The *daitās* fashion new bodies *before* the old ones have 'died'. This is going in the reverse direction of time, associating the *daitās* with ancestors.

I had argued earlier that at the ancestor propitiation ceremony, actions are governed by a principle of reversal. The ancestors stand for the past and for offerings to reach them, they have to be made in the inverse manner from offerings to the living. Ancestors are also seen as the senders of progeny since the first ancestor worship performed by a man takes place at his wedding as part of other fertility rites. The *daitās'* tribal ancestry links them with the deity's ancestor Nīḷamādhaba and his ancestral worshipper, the tribal chief Viśvabāsu.

Birth and death are both closely linked to the ancestors. The *daitās*, as representing Jagannātha's ancestors, are the ones who are concerned with both the death and the birth of the deities. This close association between birth and death expresses itself spatially; the place where the *daitās* fashion the new bodies of the deities and the place where they bury them are situated in the same area of the outer compound (see diagram in Chapter 6).

In Amrapalli's interpretation of the evening ritual, she associated *kāma*, desire and the shedding of the seed, with the wheel of birth, death, rebirth, death being characterized in a pithy saying as sleep in the mother's womb. Veena Das reports the following characterization of death by an old Punjabi lady: 'It is like being shifted from one breast to the other breast of the mother. The child feels lost in that one instant, but not for long' (1979:98).

The intimate relationship between birth and death may be the factor which explains why the devadasis should not procreate. During the fashioning of the new logs, the devadasis are present but separated from the proceedings. They must remain outside the structure where the *daitās* are working. This reminds us of the presence of the *deis* during the delivery of the queen; they sing auspicious songs but must remain outside the bedchamber, behind a curtain. There is another festival during which the devadasis must also remain outside. During the festival of goddess Bimalā in the month of *āświna* (Sept.–Oct.) in the temple, a devadasi sings songs praising that goddess while standing outside her temple. She is not allowed to go inside. In the last chapter, the close association between certain goddesses and the ancestors was pointed out. These goddesses are represented as unmarried and, like Kāḷī, have ambivalent characteristics. Bimalā, in the songs sung by the devadasi, is identified with Durgā as well as with other village goddesses such as Mangaḷā.[8] The presence of the devadasis during the 'birth' of the deities as well as during Bimalā's festival indicates the auspiciousness of the occasion. Their separation from the actual proceedings can be understood as arising from the close association between birth and death.

The type of goddess invoked for the fertility of women as well as for the health of children are, like Bimalā, represented without a male consort. Goddess Mangaḷā for example is worshipped every Tuesday (called *mangaḷabāra*) of the month of *caitra* (Mar.–Apr.), along with other similar goddesses such as Sitaḷā, Bimalā, Śyāmā Kāḷī, Barāhī. Women worship these goddesses for the avoidance of disease. They

offer pots of a milk and cheese drink called *poṇā*, which they break in the middle of the road. Like the ancestors, these goddesses are both senders of diseases and natural disasters as well as of progeny and well-being.

Goddess Mangaḷā plays an important role during the search for the new logs. It is she who in a dream communicates to the search party the location of the trees. Such a role can be thought of as the 'conception' of the deities.

The 'death' and the 'birth' of the deities take place at the hands of the *daitās*. The *devadasis* are separated from the deities' death since they do not observe the ten days of impurity required of the deities' blood relatives. They are present at but separated from the deities' 'birth'. The devadasis, unlike the *daitās*, are not ambivalent; they are the 'always auspicious ones' (*nitya sumangalī*).

The new images, even though they will contain the same 'soul substance', have to be consecrated before they can be worshipped and before they can receive the 'soul'. This consecration is performed by the *rājagurus* and other *śāsan* brahmins. It is a *pratiṣṭhā* ceremony and it includes an affusion (*abhiṣeka*). During the *abhiṣeka* which is performed over the *nyāsā dāru* the Puruṣasūkta is recited for Jagannātha (Tripathi 1978:257). This well-known Vedic verse (RV X.90) states how the cosmos with society and its hierarchical stratification into four classes were born out of the sacrifice of the Cosmic Man.[9] The four classes making up society—called *varṇas*—correspond to various parts of the body of the Cosmic Man divided vertically into hierarchically arranged parts. The mouth corresponds to the brahmins, the arms to the kṣatriyas, the thighs to the vaiśyas and the feet to the śūdras.

The brahmins, in this consecration ceremony, similar to the coronation of the king, infuse Jagannātha, the sovereign of Orissa, with the verse which embodies the hierarchical order of society. This they do at the same time that the *daitās* and the devadasis inside and outside respectively of an adjoining structure deal with inauspicious and auspicious aspects of the renewal of kingship in the form of Jagannātha. These rituals enact the constituents of kingship; on the one hand the king is the preserver of the order of society and on the other he is the source of fertility, prosperity and well-being of the land and the people. The former concerns are symbolized in the vertical hierarchical division of the body, and the latter are symbolized in the lateral non-hierarchical division of the body into the right and the left.

Interpretation of the Car Festival

The bathing festival which inaugurates the car festival presents in a short sequence all the themes which will later be elaborated. The dominant note of this day is the drenching of the images which takes place on the bathing platform on the edge of the outside eastern wall. This bath is the only time in the year that the images are actually drenched in water. All other baths and affusions are effected on the reflections of the deities in mirrors. In this case a profusion of water is poured on the images themselves, dissolving the colouring of their outer coating. This literal dissolution of the features painted on the face of the deities is accompanied by a dissolution of the normal boundaries both spatial and social. Spatially the deities are taken out of the inner sanctum and exposed to public gaze; even more extra-ordinary they are offered food in full view of an undiscriminated crowd where high and low, pure and impure are all mixed together. This again is a unique event, cooked food never being offered in public except on that occasion, since food offerings are conducted behind closed doors. But on this day it is not only as if the doors were opened since that would still only allow those persons who can enter the temple to witness the offering. In this case the offering takes place on a platform which is so situated that it is in full view of everyone outside the temple as well as inside the temple.

The normal social boundaries are also dissolved; the *daitās* and the brahmin servants together drench the images, together carry them, and together sit on the platform while the three *pūjā paṇḍās* do the offering. For the rest of the year, the *daitās* cannot touch the images nor can they be present when the offerings take place.

There is also a dissolution of the distinction between auspicious and inauspicious: The *daitās* and the devadasis, who are normally separated or relate to each other agonistically, are both present during the public meal offering. The devadasi dances at the foot of the platform while the offering is taking place.

The theme of dissolution is most appropriate, particularly as it is conveyed mainly through water. It is reminiscent of the original undifferentiated waters, *pralaya*. These waters mark the end as well as the beginning of time. When the four ages have run their course and decay and degeneration has overcome this world, it is destroyed and it returns to the undifferentiated waters out of which a new cycle of ages (*yugas*) begins anew.[10]

The appropriateness of this theme is obvious; the deities and with

them the kingdom—the land and the people—through the passage of time have degenerated and they must be rejuvenated. What happens is a miniature version, or rather a feeble echo, of what happens on a cosmic scale at the end of the *yugas*. The theme, as we will see below, is not only alluded to in the drenching and other events of the bathing festival, but is brought in much more directly later on.

The water for this drenching comes from the well situated in front of the temple of goddess Sitaḷā. This is appropriate since Sitaḷā is the goddess of fever and pox and the drenching initiates the illness of the deities. A popular exegesis of the cause for the deities' illness is that they have caught cold by being drenched. The water from the well of Sitaḷā is only used by worshippers who come to Sitaḷā when illness has stricken someone in their family. This water dissolves the paint on the deities' bodies. The theme of dissolution, of *pralaya*, is appropriately ushered in by a goddess who is of the same type of Bimalā, Durgā, and Mangaḷā. Sitaḷā is associated both with disease and death as well as with well-being and birth. The dissolution brought about by the water from her well symbolizes the time between death and birth, the sleep in the womb,[11] the end and the beginning, pregnant with new possibilities.

After the drenching, the deities are covered from head to foot with huge masks of the elephant-headed god Ganeś. In the previous chapter Ganeś is listed as one of the 'door-guardians'; he is also one of the eight deities to whom *baḷi* is offered, along with others such as the guardians of the fields and Śiva as the Great Time (*mahākāḷa*). Ganeś is the son of Śiva and Śiva is the destroyer of Time, the one who at the end of the *yugas* burns up the world which will later be flooded with waters.[12] Ganeś is also invoked at the beginning of any endeavour. Thus Ganeś is associated with doors—i.e. passages and hence time and with Śiva as the Great Time. The deities at the bathing festival become Ganeś introducing both the beginning of this festival and the theme of Time.

Besides introducing the major themes of the festival, namely Time and Renewal, the bathing festival also introduces almost all the themes which will be later developed in the festival. These are the following: illness and rejuvenation by using water from the well of Sitaḷā; the king becoming a sweeper since the king or his representative sweeps the bathing platform; the pilgrimage journey since the deities are taken outside the temple to a place where they are in full view of everyone, regardless of any distinctions; the stay in a different place,

namely on the bathing platform; the return journey by bringing back the deities inside the temple. The bathing festival is like a musical overture; it states the main themes of the symphony to follow and also has in it the germs of the later developments.

The period of illness starts when the deities are brought back inside the main temple. This is most vividly and freshly expressed in the devadasis' song of the Seeing Fifth. In line 13 Lakṣmī says: 'Before entering the room, he took a hold of my hand, and pointed to his head.' This, the devadasis told me, is a gesture indicating that Jagannātha has a headache. As the next two lines clearly show, this is no temporary headache but the beginning of illness: 'His body being so very tired, he could not speak; at one place the three remained. They cannot get up, they cannot sit; Daśārathī is very tired.'

Illness is inauspicious, it indicates decay and the possibility of death. The temple is silent, all the auspicious sounds are absent and in particular the dance and song of the devadasis. The great kitchen lies idle.

The period of illness is also a return to the time when Jagannātha was the deity of the tribals, before the cult was established by the founder king Indradyumna. The manner in which the *daitās* treat the deities during this period is referred to as *śabari pūjā*; 'tribal worship'. The *daitās* are said to first taste the fruits that are offered to ascertain whether they are ripe or not; they do not throw the peels of the fruits outside but drop them on the floor; they only offer raw food. They live together with the deities unceremoniously.

The period of illness is a return to the tribal antecedants of Jagannātha, before any brahmin had ever set foot in Viśvabāsu's territory, and the brahmins are excluded from that time and place. There is one exception and that is Pati Mahāpātra a descendant of the daughter of the tribal chief and the king's brahmin priest. He is the sole link between the tribal past and the Hindu present. The reversal of time that this going back to the tribal past signifies—as the reversals which take place during ancestor propitiation—is both auspicious and inauspicious. It involves simultaneously illness and rejuvenation. This period parallels the one in the festival of the new body during which the *daitās* fashion new bodies for the deities. The deities emerge rejuvenated from their fortnight of illness.

The rejuvenated images, however, do not emerge from the hands of the *daitās* complete; their pupil is missing. This is a crucial omission for without pupils one cannot see. The Oriya word for 'sight', or

'vision', is *druṣṭi*; it also means 'knowledge', or 'wisdom'. This power of 'seeing', 'knowing', or 'discriminating' is given by the brahmin servants after the deities have been purified. The *daitās* have the capacity to rejuvenate the deities but not to endow them with knowledge. This is the speciality of the brahmins and can only be acquired in a pure state. Knowledge and purity can be said to be one and the same and both are exemplified best in the most learned brahmins.

On the twelfth day, the *daitās* go to the palace bringing the left-overs from the bodies of the deities to each member of the king's family. The king then, after having touched a piece of cloth, gives a cloth to each of the *daitās* who then tie it in front of the main palace gate. My informants told me specifically that this does not constitute a ceremony of temple dedication. Neither can it be construed as a ceremony of dedication to palace service since the *daitās* are not palace servants. A clue to the interpretation of this act can be found in a line of the devadasis' song of the Seeing Fifth. The next to last line is as follows: 'The mother tore the garment of the gajapti.' (The mother refers to Lakṣmī.) The action of the devadasis as they sing this line is to tear the garment of a *daitā*, not of the king. When I asked Amrapalli what this could possibly mean, she told me that probably in the past they tore the garment of the king and not that of the *daitā*. Thus she thought that in the past the king could play this role. The identification between the king and the *daitā* is communicated in the song and the ritual action of the devadasis as well as in the interpretation of Amrapalli. The king and the *daitās* are identified at that time. This is not surprising, in the light of what was discussed in previous chapters concerning Lakṣmī and sovereignty. Jagannātha at that time is separated from Lakṣmī. The king as Jagannātha's living representation is also affected by this separation. During the festival he becomes a sweeper; sovereignty has left him. The *daitās*—the living representatives of the mythical *daityās* (demons)—are also bereft of sovereignty as the myth of the churning of the ocean has taught us. We may also recall that in the myth of Lakṣmī's curse, Jagannātha and Baḷabhadra without Lakṣmī are not recognized for who they are, but are taken to be beggars and thieves. The king, at that time, is separated from auspiciousness and linked to the fertile, ambiguous, powers of the *daitās*.

The period of illness represents a reversal of time. The pilgrimage journey takes up a related theme, but one that has not been developed

so far, although it is implicit in what has happened so far. The second movement in this symphony has left us on a unfinished phrase: time has been reversed but now it has to start again. Having left the present, one has to come back to it in order for time to resume. This is—to my mind—what the third movement, namely the pilgrimage journey, the stay in the other temple, and the return journey are all about.

The pilgrimage journey is a crossing of the river of time, it is a *tīrtha yātrā*. The word has come to mean pilgrimage or pilgrimage place; its original meaning is given by Diana Eck, a Sanskritist, in the following passage:

> The word *tīrtha* comes from the Sanskrit root *tṛ*, meaning 'to cross over'. The primary ancient meaning of the word is a 'ford', a place or a town along the riverbank where one can ford the river. Indeed, many of India's most important places of pilgrimage were originally on the banks of her great rivers and were 'fords' in that literal sense (1978:173).

Originally, there was a river that had to be crossed between the main temple and the Guṇḍicā temple. The river is still there but a bridge has been built and the river does not have to be forded any longer. Previously, six instead of three chariots had to be built; three chariots remaining on one side of the river and three more on the other side of the river. There was thus a literal crossing which used to take place. The idea of crossing a river is however preserved in the word *tīrtha* as well as in its symbolic meaning, a crossing of the river of Time. The pilgrimage of the deities is a metaphor for a stopping of time, a reversal of time and finally a resumption of time. The fact that the festival takes place outside of normal forward flowing time is also expressed by the fact that it takes place from beginning to end in separation from Jagannātha's wife Lakṣmī. This outward-going pilgrimage journey is both a restatement of the fact that a time boundary has been crossed—namely the deities have been rejuvenated—as well as a preparation for the return journey, the resumption of time, and the eventual reunion with Lakṣmī.

The dissolution of all boundaries is the hall-mark of the pilgrimage journey. The cliché: 'a sea of people' regains its force and vividness in that context. Hundreds of thousands of people cover every inch of space in the wide road which goes from the main temple to the Guṇḍicā temple. The pilgrims seize the huge ropes, a gesture and a moment highly emotionally charged for the pilgrims, innumerable

hands touching each other irrespective of sex, caste, religion or any other conceivable distinction. On the chariots *daitās*, brahmin servants, and śūdra servants all sit together. Things come crashing on the chariots, thrown by anonymous hands in the crowd; coconuts split open upon landing and spill their milk. More than anything else, these anonymous offerings thrown onto the chariots express for me the ultimate dissolution. Food offering to the deities are at any other time so carefully handled; pilgrims cannot offer food directly to the deities but must give it to a *pūjā paṇḍā* who will offer it on their behalf.

Even the normal boundaries of language are transgressed. The chariot caller shouts out obscenities to the crowd who responds in kind and egg him on. Oriyans, like most people everywhere, are not prone to using obscene language normally. In fact the farmer whom I interviewed about the festival of the menses of the earth is the caller of the chariot of Jagannātha. I asked him to repeat some of the things which he calls out at the time of the car festival. But both my and P. C. Mishra's efforts were totally in vain; he remained tight-lipped and silent, an eloquent witness to the inappropriateness of obscene language outside of that extraordinary time.

As Hawley remarks (1977:707–8) the dissolution of boundaries is like the undoing of the churning of the milk ocean and the return to the undifferentiated waters which separate one cycle of eons from another. The theme of *pralaya* is in fact directly referred to in the pilgrimage journey. The chariot of Jagannātha makes a stop at the temple of mother's sister (*māusi mā*) who is called 'half the ocean' (*arddhāśinī*). This visit is also mentioned in the song of the devadasis of the Seeing Fifth in line 18 where the *dāsīs* tell Lakṣmī that Jagannātha has gone to the area of the temple of Mother's Sister.

The name of the goddess of that temple refers one to the myth of the origin of Puri. This myth was told to me by Trinayana:

> At the time of *pralaya*, when the whole world was covered with water, even at that time the hill of Nīḷācala (another name for Puri, specifically the hill on which the temple is) was visible above the waters since it is *nityadham* (the eternal place) and it exists through all the ages. On that hill, under a banyan tree there was Nīḷamādhaba. At his orders, the goddess Bimalā and Arddhāśinī sucked the waters. Because of this the whole earth was formed.

From this myth, it would appear that the two goddesses, Bimalā and Arddhāśinī are sisters. They each drank half the ocean, thus drying up the whole world.

Thus traversing the river of time or the undifferentiated waters of timelessness the deities arrive at Guṇḍicā temple. This temple is named after the wife of king Indradyumna, founder of the cult and the temple. It was upon the request of Queen Guṇḍicā that Indradyumna is said to have initiated the car festival. That is when he built this temple for her. The name of the temple thus refers us to before the beginning. This temple has no image installed in its inner sanctum and there is therefore no worship done in it during the rest of the year.

The Vaishnavites consider Guṇḍicā temple, or rather that temple when the deities reside in it, to be Brundāban, the place where Krishna performed his divine play. Having crossed the river of time, the deities reside in another place which is not involved in normal time since it remains empty and devoid of daily rituals the rest of the year. Jagannātha stays there away from the world of sovereignty (*aiśwarjya*), separated from his wife Lakṣmī. The devadasis who sing and dance in Guṇḍicā are not identified with Lakṣmī at that time. When Lakṣmī comes from the main temple on the fifth day, to vent her anger, the dasis come out with her, they accompany her. While doing their ritual in the temple of Guṇḍicā they are *gopīs* rather than the *dāsīs* of Lakṣmī. This is very clearly expressed in one of the initial sentences spoken by the devadasi at the time of the dialogue with *daitās* behind closed doors in the main temple. The line is as follows: 'Have you forgotten the road? This is not Guṇḍicā temple. How have you come here? In Guṇḍicā you had singing and dancing and young women, here there is nothing. This is the dwelling of a housewife . . . .' The *dāsī* who speaks these lines refers to the 'young women' and the dancing and singing in Guṇḍicā as if they were different persons from herself. She contrasts this house in which she is the *dāsī* of a housewife with that other house. Implicit in this contrast is the opposition between the house with the wife and the other house where the wife is not. These young women who dance and sing in Guṇḍicā are not *dāsīs* of Lakṣmī; they are unrelated to Jagannātha's wife, they are *parakiyā*. The stay in Guṇḍicā, like Krishna's *līlā* in Brundāban, is poised in suspended Time. Jagannātha's enthrallment is brusquely interrupted by an angry Lakṣmī.

The return is initiated—not surprisingly—by Lakṣmī. When she comes on the fifth she throws in Jagannātha's face the magic dust which Bimalā gave her. The effect is as predicted, Jagannātha's thoughts turn to conjugal bliss, his longing to be reunited with Lakṣmī

being indicated by his body lurching forward. The moment marks the time when the first preparations for the return journey are begun: the three chariots are turned around. Lakṣmī represents normal forward flowing time and it is in longing for her that Jagannātha assures everyone that he will return to this world so that time can start again and everyone can enjoy the fruits of the regeneration of the deities.

Bimalā's role as the mistress of illusion (*māyā*) who gives Lakṣmī the magic dust which will wrench Jagannātha away from the enchantment of transcendence is interesting. Lakṣmī by herself has no power over time. She is time-bound; she does not participate in the festival of renewal. Bimalā is familiar with both auspicious and inauspicious time. Bimalā here plays a mediating role. In the songs of the devadasis it is stated several times that it is thanks to her that Jagannātha has returned. She can thus intervene where Lakṣmī cannot.

This difference between Lakṣmī and Bimalā expresses itself as an amiable cooperation between the two goddesses in this case. However in the case of Lakṣmī and Subhadrā—who is also an unmarried goddess identified with Durgā as the images of the side deities on her chariot indicate—the difference between them is bitterly resented by Lakṣmī. In the songs of the devadasis Lakṣmī is most angry at her sister-in-law whom she holds responsible for Jagannātha's absence. In the songs, a strong antagonism between Lakṣmī and Subhadrā is expressed. It is the antagonism between the wife and the unmarried sister, the 'house sister' (*ghara bhāuni*) as Lakṣmī calls her in the last song (line 12), who has not left the parental home and married. Lakṣmī complains about Subhadrā in the following lines: 'My husband's sister has given me a lot of sorrow . . . Her words are always heeded by her brother' (First song). 'The Lord left me and gave me pain . . . In the festival he has taken his sister . . . Oh, Yellow Faced mother (Subhadrā, whose colour is yellow) because of your affection this has happened' (Second song). 'Our house sister will be angry' (Third song) presumably because Lakṣmī is preventing Jagannātha from entering into the inner sanctum. Subhadrā here represents Durgā's other aspect. The mediating category of Durgā-Bimalā-Subhadrā is here exemplified. As Bimalā she is instrumental in restoring auspiciousness. As Subhadrā she is instrumental (according to Lakṣmī) in separating Jagannātha from Lakṣmī.

The return journey repeats in the reverse direction the first journey. Time is crossed in the other direction, back to normal time. The first

intimation of a return to normalcy is the meeting of Lakṣmī by the king, midway between the temple and the palace. The king effects the reunion between Lakṣmī and Jagannātha. He goes to meet Lakṣmī and personally brings her to Jagannātha and presents her to him by lifting her so that she can face her Lord. Both the king and Jagannātha by these actions, reintegrate this world, leaving behind a fertile but potentially dangerous period.

The chariot of Jagannātha is then pulled and taken to the eastern gate of the temple, along that of Subhadrā and Baḷabhadra. Before the deities are returned inside the temple, an offering to the Yoginīs is performed during the night. The Yoginīs are attendants of Kāḷī. The gesture is reminiscent of the offering to goddesses made by women during the month of *caitra*. In both cases *poṇā* is offered. Could one read this gesture as a farewell to those goddesses who represent the ambiguous period of illness and rejuvenation just left behind? The goddesses worshipped in *caitra* are both the senders as well as the removers of illness and other natural disasters. The farewell to their attendants, the Yoginīs, marks the rejuvenation of the deities and the renewal of the realm. The monsoon has usually arrived by that time. The king, reunited with Lakṣmī, is the bringer of good rains, the guardian of the earth's abundance.[13]

The prosperity of the renewed realm is signified immediately after the offering to the Yoginīs. The deities are then given the 'golden dress'. Their unfinished forms are completed with limbs of solid gold. A viewing of the deities thus adorned is considered especially auspicious and the throng of pilgrims circumambulate the three chariots. Gold is associated with kingship and we will recall that the celebration of the Gajapati's new regnal year is called 'the golden' [festival] (*suniā*). Lakṣmī is also called the golden; that epithet is applied to her by Jagannātha in the dialogue between the *daitās* and the devadasis (line 12; Lakṣmī is called *subarna Lakṣmī*). This golden dress which is donned just before the deities are returned inside the temple ushers in the return to sovereignty and auspicious time.

This return to auspiciousness is joyfully expressed in the 'meeting song' of the devadasis. It is Bimalā who announces the good news of Jagannātha's return to Lakṣmī and who in passing points out that Lakṣmī was able to achieve this with her help (lines 1–3). Lakṣmī instructs her *dāsīs* to spread the news in the town and to decorate it with the full vessels, leaves, plantain trees, flags, jewelry, canopies and the fly-whisk, all signs of auspiciousness. Then she instructs

them to get the food ready. The kitchen of the great temple has been idle until then and is about to be opened again. Although in the next line Lakṣmī tells the *dāsīs* to close the door on Jagannātha, her joy at her husband's return is unconcealed. Her intention is quite clearly to let her husband know that she thoroughly disapproves of the whole affair, that his leaving gave her pain, and she intends to teach him a lesson: 'We will find out how he manages to come. The Lord left me and gave me pain. He should not come in the house. In the festival he has taken his sister.' Lakṣmī is smarting about her sister-in-law going and her being left behind.

The last act in this great drama is the closing of the door on Jagannātha's face and the lively dialogue between the *daitās* and the devadasis. The devadasis told me that this quarrel is a favourite of the pilgrims and is always very crowded. Lakṣmī is having fun; she does not for a minute seriously intend to keep her husband out, she is too obviously pleased with his return; but she intends to make him feel her power as she did in the story of Lakṣmī's curse. Jagannātha will be reduced to pleading and bribing. The *dāsīs* clearly relish their position and they oscillate between calling Jagannātha by some of his most lofty titles, such as 'Supreme Lord of the Infinite Egg of Brahma' (*aseṣa brahmāṇḍa nātha gosaī*) and calling him by a most familiar diminutive: Jaguṇi and using the familiar form of the second person address. They are delighted to have him in their mercy: this most exalted being is stuck outside at the door of his own house. There are echoes here of the myth of Lakṣmī's curse; Jagannātha cannot reintegrate the world of sovereignty without Lakṣmī; he is utterly dependent on her and she knows this and plays with it to the great delight of the assembled throngs.

In this sung dialogue the *daitās* and the devadasis enact the same agonistic relationship that they did when the angry Lakṣmī goes to Guṇḍicā to break the chariot of Jagannātha and the devadasis tear the garment of one of the *daitās*. The opening of the door into the sanctum and the reunion of Jagannātha and Lakṣmī marks the end of the work of the *daitās* as well as the end of the festival. Time starts again in a renewed world.

Although this festival is of the type discussed by Leach in his essay on time (1968:132–6) it does not quite fit the tripartite schema first developed by Van Gennep (1908) and further elaborated by Turner (1969). The basic schema delineated by these authors is the following: Phase A, a separation from normal time and space in which the

central participants, neophytes, deities or what-have-you die; Phase B, a liminal period of between and betwixt where time is suspended; Phase C, bringing back the central actors to normal time and space, reaggregating them to everyday social life.

It can be seen from this brief outline that the car festival seems to have two liminal periods: the period of illness—or death in the case of the festival of the new body—is a liminal period, with danger and secrecy. But so is the pilgrimage journey. In fact the pilgrimage journey can be seen in itself as deploying the tripartite structure: the going out to Guṇḍicā being the separation phase, the stay in Guṇḍicā the liminal phase and the return journey the reaggregating phase. Similarly the bathing festival, the period of illness and the festival of the 'eye' can also be fitted in such a tripartite schema. Looked at in this way one has two rites of passage performed consecutively. However, I think that by looking at all these phases as belonging to one event, one is more faithful to the drama being enacted as well as to the feeling of the participants. This is one long event rather than two separate festivals. But more importantly by separating these events into two festivals, one loses the continuity and the message embodied in that continuity. The pilgrimage journey resolves what had been left unresolved by the period of illness. The festival of the eye dealt with the power of discrimination, with purity and impurity but not with time. Time still had to be returned to normal time. It is this task orientation of the ritual that gives the key to understanding its structure. Rituals perform a certain task and the nature of the task has to be clearly understood and constantly kept in mind in order to grasp their process. Thus I have found that Tambiah's emphasis on the performative aspect of rituals is much more fruitful than other schemas based on Van Gennep's early analyses (see Tambiah 1973, 1979).

Similarly, a structuralist interpretation would have distorted the events of this festival. Such an interpretation would have placed the *daitās* and the devadasis in opposition to each other, an opposition correspoding to the binary pair auspiciousness/inauspiciousness. The problem with such an interpretation is that the two elements in this pair are not always opposed to each other. The *daitās* deal both with auspiciousness *and* inauspiciousness. The devadasis and the *daitās* are sometimes opposed as in their confrontation during Herā Pañcami but sometimes they cooperate as during the 'birth' of the deities. It is only by looking at the context of use of these categories that one can

arrive at some understanding. Oppositions should not be taken *a priori* to be of an exclusive (privative) kind. Auspiciousness and inauspiciousness are in some contexts inextricably intertwined and in others clearly separated and opposed.[14]

Conclusion

Part I: Theoretical Implications

In this concluding chapter I shall place this work in the context of the literature which has dealt with similar issues. The process will give me the opportunity to summarize the theoretically relevant contributions of this study.

Until recently, auspiciousness received far less attention than purity. An early work giving an important place to both is Srinivas' study of the Coorgs (1952). In that work, Srinivas presents the two complexes of *maṅgala* on the one hand and of *polé* and *maḍi* on the other as separate categories. The term *maṅgala* designates rites of passage in the life-cycle, the wedding ceremony being the *maṅgala* ceremony *par excellence*, so much so that the word *maṅgala* has come to mean the marriage ceremony. Other *maṅgalas* are girls' puberty rituals and the celebration for a woman who has had ten surviving children.

Polé and *maḍi* are concepts which are intimately connected to the social structure (ibid.:108). In his interpretation of the ethnographic data, Srinivas creates two overarching categories. By joining *maṅgala* to *maḍi* he arrives at the notion of good-sacredness. By joining inauspiciousness to impurity, he arrives at the notion of bad-sacredness. The effect of creating these super-categories is to blur the distinction between auspiciousness and purity.

In their review of Srinivas' work on the Coorgs, Dumont and Pocock further minimize the difference between the categories of auspiciousness and purity. They write:

> . . . we can ask ourselves whether the auspiciousness of marriage is really as foreign to the basic ideas of purity and impurity as an analysis in terms of solidarity would lead us to believe . . . . It is remarkable that marriage is one of the rare 'rites of passage' in which, unlike birth, girls' puberty or death, no impurity is involved; accordingly it is the most auspicious ceremony. It is possible then, to suppose that the condition of the bride and groom in marriage is similar to that of people of a superior caste (Dumont and Pocock 1959:33).

Even though such a reading of Srinivas' material proved to be enormously influential in anthropological studies, it was not the only one. Influenced by Srinivas' work as well as informed by on the ground observation in South Indian villages, John Carman stressed the difference between the values of auspiciousness and those of purity. Speaking of the two opposites to the state of ritual impurity, this is what he writes in *Village Christians and Hindu Culture*:

> One is the state of ritual purity required to carry out certain religious acts. . . . It is, however, the second 'opposite' to ritual impurity which is more significant in the lives of most village Hindus. This is the 'auspicious' state. Whereas ritual purity is considered an unusual and temporary condition, except for ascetics who have placed themselves outside the ordinary structure of society, it is the auspicious state which is the quintessence of normal life in society. It is most fully realized in the state of marriage, and most clearly symbolized in the emblems which the married woman is allowed and expected to wear (Carman and Luke 1968:32).

At the end of this passage Carman refers in a footnote to Srinivas' work on the Coorgs. Carman's observations and reading of Srinivas, coming as they did from a historian of religion writing about Christianity in India, remained largely (if not totally) ignored among social scientists. The publication in 1966 of Dumont's brilliant work on the caste system, *Homo Hierarchicus* (first translated in English in 1970), contributed greatly to the dominant interpretative view which collapsed the categories of auspiciousness and purity.

Srinivas himself in his second ethnography, *The Remembered Village* (1976), seems to have abandoned auspiciousness as a major cultural category. Like the Coorg ethnography, Srinivas' later ethnographic work is situated in Karnataka. In the second work the whole *maṅgala* complex is absent; the word is not even to be found in the glossary, whereas the words *polé* and *maḍi* are recorded.

Such was the influence of Dumont's work that Carman himself apparently lost sight of the distinction between auspiciousness and purity. Reviewing his study of the theology of Rāmānuja (1974), he writes:

> I soon noticed that two types of phrases almost always occured together in descriptions of the Divine nature. The first is 'utterly opposed to anything defiling' (or alternatively, 'without a trace of impurity'); the second is 'ocean of auspicious qualities' or some similar phrase. I assumed that these were merely the negative and positive expressions of the same concept of holiness. In the light of the contributions to this volume I now have to ask whether

many Western historians of religion, *myself included*, have been combining quite distinct Hindu values because both were considered equivalent to 'holy' [Emphasis added.] (Carman 1983:15).

Given Carman's earlier clear distinction between the pure and the auspicious this is remarkable. In his earlier view, auspiciousness and purity, even though representing distinct values, were both opposed to impurity. Carman never posited two distinct axes of values, each having two poles, one positive and one negative. This may have led to a later fusing of auspiciousness and purity.

To my knowledge, it is not until 1976, with the publication of Khare's work on food, that the issue of the distinctiveness of the two axes of auspiciousness/inauspiciousness and purity/impurity is again taken up in the literature. In his discussion of foods at birth and death ceremonies, Khare notices that the mother and the cremator are both impure but that the food for the mother is auspicious whereas the food for the cremator is inauspicious:

> We have further noted food cycles at birth as being essentially and predominantly festive, bearing little affinity to the mourning food cycles, although both may generate ritual pollution. . . . It may be useful now to consider them briefly against the auspicious and impure axis and see how the two fundamentally differ, despite several superficial similarities (Khare 1976:184).

Reflecting on the difference between the fasts and festivals observed by women and the 'spiritual fasts' observed by men, Khare is led to generalize about the meaning of purity and auspiciousness. This is what he writes:

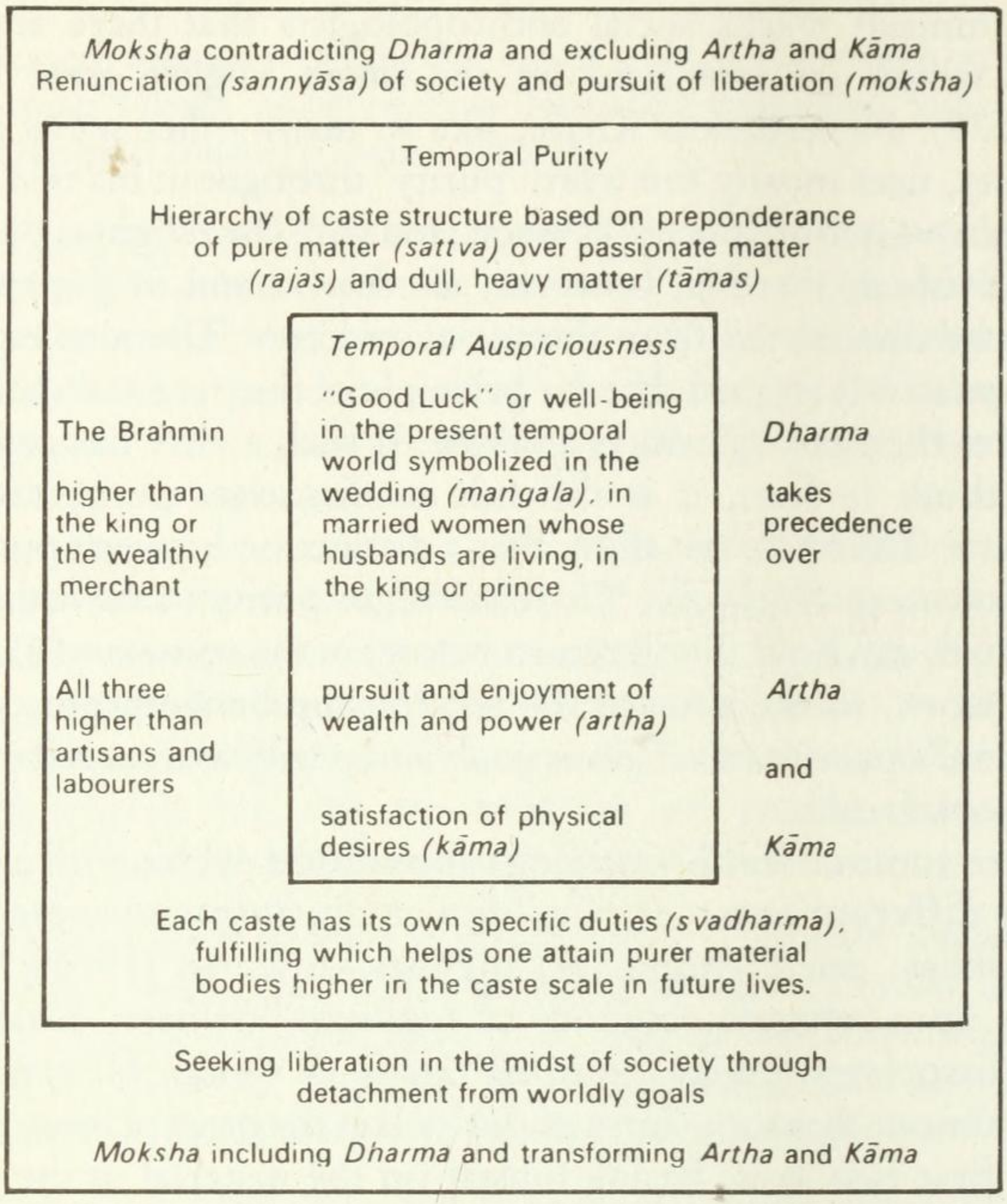
> . . . the value of ritual purity that must be ultimately directed towards either maintaining or catering to religious aims of the individual appears conceptually distinguished from auspiciousness which represents a dominant Hindu value of collective life (ibid.:157).

Khare here connects purity with the religious pursuit of the individual. He further specifies that unless a householder intends to become a *sannyasi*, auspiciousness is the more important pursuit (ibid.:157). Such an interpretation would restrict the meaning of purity to the pursuit of renunciation and liberation. This has indeed been recognized by many as being an individual pursuit. The word purity, however, translates several indigenous words, some of these being *śuddha*, *pavitra*, *sauca*, *sattva*. These terms refer to a cluster of related concepts which need to be carefully mapped linguistically.

Khare himself warns social anthropologists that there are many words which are translated by the single English term 'purity' (1976a:79). Nevertheless Khare, like so many other social anthropologists, uses mostly the word 'purity' throughout his two books. In the above quote, 'purity' is associated with the religious pursuit of the individual; there is, however, another strand of purity which cannot be dissociated from the social structure. Dumont especially has persuasively argued that the principle of the pure and the impure underlies the caste system as a whole. If such a view has any merit, and I think it does, it is difficult to dissociate purity from the collective. Thus I do not think that a distinction between purity and auspiciousness which, like Khare's, assigns purity to the realm of the individual, can hold. I will return below, in the context of Carman's recent work, to the issue of the relationship between purity as the individual's pursuit of religious goals and purity as a crucial category in the social realm.

Khare summarizes his findings about food cycles with a scheme of four different axes: festivity/mourning; auspiciousness/ inauspiciousness; purity/impurity; highness/lowness (1976a:71). By setting up a separate category of highness/lowness, Khare once again dissociates 'purity' from hierarchy. I would, however, hold with Dumont that some form of purity is at the heart of hierarchy. As to the first two axes, basing myself on the material in the present study, I would argue that festivity and mourning are specific instances of the values of auspiciousness and inauspiciousness. It is true—as Inden has pointed out (1980)—that there are many indigenous words which are translated by the term auspicious; some of these are *mangaḷa*, *śubha*, *kalyāna*. A careful linguistic mapping of these different terms might help us discriminate more finely between different instances of what we call the 'auspicious'. Even though such a work remains to be done, I would tentatively argue that whatever the differences between various kinds of 'auspiciousness' may be, we are not warranted in making such a radical distinction between festivity and auspiciousness as to assign them to distinct axes. Thus we come back to the two axes: pure/impure and auspicious/inauspicious.

Let me now turn to the more recent work of John Carman. By a serendipitous turn of events, I found myself working out many of the ideas embodied in this book at the Center for the Study of World Religions (Harvard), an institution headed by Carman, where I was a research/resource associate from 1976 to 1978[1]. Given Carman's


Moksha contradicting *Dharma* and excluding *Artha* and *Kāma*
Renunciation *(sannyāsa)* of society and pursuit of liberation *(moksha)*
Temporal Purity
Hierarchy of caste structure based on preponderance of pure matter *(sattva)* over passionate matter *(rajas)* and dull, heavy matter *(tāmas)*
Temporal Auspiciousness
"Good Luck" or well-being in the present temporal world symbolized in the wedding *(maṅgala)*, in married women whose husbands are living, in the king or prince
Dharma
takes precedence over
The Brahmin
higher than the king or the wealthy merchant
pursuit and enjoyment of wealth and power *(artha)*
Artha
and
All three higher than artisans and labourers
satisfaction of physical desires *(kāma)*
Kāma
Each caste has its own specific duties *(svadharma)*, fulfilling which helps one attain purer material bodies higher in the caste scale in future lives.
Seeking liberation in the midst of society through detachment from worldly goals
Moksha including *Dharma* and transforming *Artha* and *Kāma*

early interest in the concept of auspiciousness as representing a very different set of values from those of purity, it was not surprising that he became interested in my work. We eventually organized together a conference on the theme of 'Purity and Auspiciousness' in 1980.[2] In his conference paper Carman synthesizes the contributions of the participants into a model of the Hindu world. A diagram succinctly presents the Hindu orders of value in three concentric squares (Carman 1980).

The diagram is influenced by Dumont's idea of the encompassed and the encompassing. Carman's model, however, radically modifies Dumont's scheme. The concerns of the present study would fit in the innermost square—the king, devadasis as *abyas*—as well as in the bottom part of the outer square. The latter would correspond to the discussion in Chapter 7 of the devadasis' evening ritual as interpreted in a Bhakti perspective as well as to the Tantric ritual discussed in Chapter 8. Both Bhakti and Tantra, each in their own ways, achieve a transcendence of auspiciousness, hence of time.

Even though I have said that the present study would correspond to the inner square in Carman's diagram, I would prefer to represent the relationship between what is included in the second square, namely the hierarchy of caste, differently. Dumont's concepts of the encompassed and the encompassing, which inform Carman's construction, are for me problematical.

The recognition that the principle of the pure and the impure does not account for everything in Hindu society has lead Dumont to his model of the encompassed and the encompassing. According to him, there are factors operative empirically which cannot be fitted into the ideology of the pure and the impure. These empirically observed factors are principally territoriality and the politico-economic realm. The ideology of the pure and the impure does not take into account these factors but encompasses them. Dumont identifies the realm of the encompassed—namely territory and power—with the royal domain. In contemporary India, this factor is represented mostly in the phenomenon of the dominant caste which has power by virtue of possessing the land. Thus power—the domain of the dominant castes that are heir to the older royal dominion over the land—lies outside of the principle of the pure and the impure.

In a discussion of the place of ideology Dumont (1970a:36–9) identifies the factors of power and territoriality as belonging to a residual category, namely whatever the ideology does not account for. Dumont relates the power-cum-territoriality factor to ideology by identifying it as being encompassed by the latter. This encompassed status implies more than just being outside of the realm of ideology; it implies being subordinated to it. Dumont—inspiring himself from the theory of *varṇa* in the *dharmaśāstras*—sees an absolute differentiation and hierarchization between brahmin and kshatriya. The king has lost his religious prerogatives since he cannot sacrifice and requires a brahmin to perform sacrifices for him.

This distinction between status, that is purity and pollution, and power which Dumont identifies in the ancient literature, is found again in the empirically observed phenomenon of the dominant caste. The dominant caste, heir to the royal function, is an empirically observed phenomenon which cannot be fitted into the ideology of hierarchy but is subordinated to it, in other words encompassed. This characterization indicates that the realm of power is subordinated to, as well as separate from, the realm of hierarchy. So far such a model does not conflict with the one proposed by Carman. To the

correlations between the encompassed and the empirical on the one hand, and the encompassing and the ideological on the other, Dumont adds the distinction between the sacred and the profane. The sacred corresponds to the encompassing/ideological and the profane to the encompassed/empirical. In this identification of the encompassed and the encompassing with the profane and the sacred Dumont's views part company with those of Carman.

According to Dumont, power in India has been secularized at a very early date (1970a). Dumont thus arrives at a view of the society of caste as being divided between a religious realm in which the principle of the pure and impure is central and a profane realm subordinated to the religious realm in which power and territory are central.

In Chapter 4 I have presented evidence—both textual and ethnographic—which refutes Dumont's understanding of the royal function. The problem with Dumont's model of the encompassed and the encompassing, however, is not so much of substance as of methodology. It is difficult to understand why in one realm—the sacred—action is not separate from ideology and meaning but in another—the profane—it is. Such a view rests on a theoretical position which treats social reality as being divided into two. One level is considered primary and consists of 'social forms' and the other is considered secondary and consists of 'representations'.[3] In such a view, social forms are considered to be prior to other forms, the 'representations' which are 'cultural' and include such phenomena as rituals and myths. The latter are derivative of the former. To briefly recapitulate the methodological position presented in the introduction to this book, social forms are apprehended through people's practices. Rituals and myths are also practices; they simply differ in style from everyday practices in that they are more formal. We are dealing with a unified reality, what Tambiah has called a 'cosmology'.

Even though Carman's model does not retain Dumont's division of the Hindu world into a sacred and a profane realm, it retains the static nature of the model. The Hindu world is frozen in a hierarchical relationship between the realm of *artha* and *kāma* on the one hand and that of *dharma* in which *artha* and *kāma* are subordinated on the other. I would propose a more flexible model of the Hindu world, one in which the relationship between the royal and wifely domain on one side and the status hierarchy on the other can change, sometimes the one being dominant over the other, sometimes the reverse and at other times the two being related as equivalent.

I would propose that the relationship between these two domains is a shifting one, depending on the perspective that one adopts. From the perspective of the purity/impurity axis, the king belongs to the kshatriya *varṇa* which is situated below the highest *varṇa*, that of the brahmin. Many texts attest to this hierarchical position of the king. It is ritually enacted at the end of the *puṣyābhiṣeka* ceremony in Puri when the king circumambulates the assembled brahmins and prostrates himself in front of them. From another perspective, however, the king is the very embodiment of Viṣṇu; he is a living deity. This is also attested to in many texts (see Chapter 4), as well as expressed ritually. When the king of Puri is carried to the chariots to perform the sweeping ceremony, the *rājagurus walk* by the side of the king's chair, along with the king's agnates and the feudatory kings. At the end of the Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa ritual, the king stands at the gate of the palace to give a last *darśan* to the people. He is flanked by the two *rājagurus* who are clearly in a secondary position (see Pl. 17).

This double, shifting perspective on the status of the king is precisely captured in the following passage from the Bṛhad-araṇyaka Upaniṣad:

> Verily, in the beginning this world was Brahma, one only. Being one, he was not developed. He created still further a superior form, the kshatrahood, even those who are kshatras (rulers) among gods: Indra, Varuṇa, Soma, Rudra, Parjanya, Yama, Mṛtyu, Īśāna. There is nothing higher than kshatra. Therefore at the rajasuya ceremony, the Brahmin sits below the kshatriya. Upon kshatrahood alone does he confer this honor. This same thing, namely Brahminhood (Brahma) is the source of kshatrahood. Therefore, even if the king attains supremacy, he rests finally upon Brahmahood as his own source. He fares worse in proportion as he injures one who is better (I.4, 11 quoted from Hume 1931:84 in Malamoud 1981:50).

In the article from which this quote is taken, Malamoud speaks of a 'revolving' hierarchy, a notion close to what I am here proposing. It seems to me that to conceptualize the Hindu life-world from a single consistent point of view is to ignore the fact that there is not one privileged point of view from which to look at things. The 'objective', non-situated, viewpoint is a myth dear to the Western scientific life-world but I would suggest not to the Hindu life-world.

It is not possible to represent graphically the shifting perspective which I here propose, since any one diagram representing the relationship between different realms will only capture the configuration from a particular perspective and exclude other configurations.

I would, however, retain Carman's diagrammatic representation of the relationship between the transcendental realm of *moksha* (liberation) and the rest. In as much as transcendence is a 'going beyond' it is not inappropriate to represent it as an encompassing square. In my view, one of the most important contributions of the present work is the light that it sheds on the Bhakti and Tantric traditions. In the light of my understanding of auspiciousness and inauspiciousness, Bhakti and Tantra do not represent 'inversions' or embody a rebellious anti-hierarchical impetus. These traditions elaborate upon values which exist in caste society, which are not foreign to the *dharmaśāstra* literature. They are to be found particularly in writings concerning women or in those concerning the king. As the above quote from the Bṛhad-araṇyaka Upaniṣad shows, the classical texts do not present us with a univalent view of the position of the king or of women. In some passages, the position of women seems to embody the hierarchical principle of the pure and the impure as in the following well-known verses from Manu:

> By a girl, by a young woman, or even by an aged one, nothing must be done independently, even in her own house. In childhood a female must be subject to her father, in youth to her husband, when her lord is dead to her sons; a woman must never be independent (V, 147–148, in Bühler 1969:195).

In other passages, however, a very different attitude is voiced. I would submit that such passages embody a non-hierarchical principle of the auspicious and the inauspicious, such as the following verses from Manu:

> Between wives *(striyah)* who (are designed) to bear children, who secure many blessings, who are worthy of worship and irradiate (their dwellings), and between the goddesses of fortune (*sriyah*) who (reside) in the houses (of men), there is no difference whatsoever . . . . Offspring (the due performance of) religious rites, faithful service, highest conjugal happiness and heavenly bliss for the ancestors and for oneself, depend on one's wife alone (IX.26, 28 in Bühler 1969:332).

These passages bearing on the king and on women are taken from texts which ante-date historically the beginnings of the Bhakti and Tantric traditions. They embody values which become central to those later traditions.

The devotional movements in India have been noted for their non-hierarchical nature (Dimock 1966). They have, however, never challenged the principle of hierarchy. I would at this point like to

recall the story told to me by Amrapalli about Krishna's illness and Narada getting the dust from the *gopī*'s feet to cure him (see Chapter 7). This story captures well the non-hierarchical nature of Bhakti as well as its lack of an anti-hierarchical impetus. The *gopīs* do not question the fact that they might go to hell for violating the rules of hierarchy, they simply choose to take that risk.

The Tantric traditions have been understood in the main as embodying inversions of the values of purity and impurity (Eliade 1973, Bharati 1965). As my treatment of one of the central rituals in that tradition shows (see Chapter 8), it is not a matter of inversion since concerns for the purification of various objects, spaces, and persons are clearly evident. The so-called inversions are not inversions at all but actions expressive of the values of auspiciousness and inauspiciousness.

Another paper presented at the 'Purity and Auspiciousness' conference, proposes a theoretical model for the conceptualization of the relationship between the axes of auspiciousness/inauspiciousness and purity/impurity. In his paper 'Concerning the categories of *śubha* and *śuddha* in Hindu culture: an exploratory essay', Madan offers a suggestive and elegant scheme in which he relates the actor (*pātra*) to both *śubha* and *śuddha*. The latter two categories correspond in this scheme to events and to objects respectively (Madan 1980:26). This is how Madan summarizes his findings concerning the everyday usage of the term *śubha*:

> The foregoing selection from a thesaurus of usages (collected by me in Kashmir and Uttar Pradesh) points to the conclusion that the 'family resemblance' which obtains among them has its roots in the significance of the passage of time for human beings, which varies from one category of persons to another and even from one individual to another (Madan 1980:11).

In contrast to the use of the term *śubha*, Madan states that the use of the term *śuddha* generally refers not to events but to images of fullness or 'completeness in the specific sense of perfection' (ibid.:12). In other words, the term *śubha* refers to events, that is to actions that take place in time, and the term *śuddha* refers to states of being, particularly to a condition of completeness and perfection. According to him, the term *śubha* does not refer to states of being. Madan recognizes nevertheless, that informants will often use the term *śubha* or *aśubha* to refer to a state of being such as that of the married non-widowed woman or that of the widow. He argues that such

usages are figurative and that it is the task of the anthropologist to distinguish between different manners of speaking (ibid.:26–7). It seems to me that such a position is a risky one. Given Madan's methodological choice of studying the meaning of a family of words by 'examining them in the contexts of other meanings (which is what "use" really is)' (ibid.:2), a procedure which gives primacy to people's utterances, I would think that it would be an extremely delicate task to discriminate between figurative and literal ways of speaking. What strikes me as significant in Madan's inquiries is that they bear only on the term *śubha* and not on other terms with similar connotations such as the word *mangaḷa* for example. The only instance he gives us for the use of the term *mangaḷa* is to refer to a person, the prostitute: *mangalamukhī* (literally, the auspicious-faced woman). In Madan's discussion of his informants' use of this word, as well as in his discussion of my interpretation of the meaning of the devadasis, he argues that the use of those terms refer not to a state of being but to these persons as 'creative agents' who are associated with happy events. The emphasis is placed on events occurring in time. The reasoning seems somewhat forced to me; I am not persuaded that the term *mangaḷa* may not refer to a state of being. Such doubts are reinforced by Madan's argument concerning my own work:

> The *devadāsī*, dedicated to god, imbued with divine devotion, sings and dances in the outer sanctum of the temple at various times of the day and in the year; and this brings about the well-being . . . . Dancing, we are further told, symbolises (stands for) sexual union in this ritual context. If any one of the elements (purpose, properly accredited actor, the action, the time, and the place) is absent or imperfect, though nothing else is changed, formally, the auspiciousness of the situation disappears. To illustrate, the most talented Odissi dancer could not be allowed to dance in the temple for she is not the right *pātra*, just as the *devadāsī* may not leave Puri to become a professional dancer and yet retain the right to participate in the ritual complex of the temple (ibid.:24–5).

I would submit that the very same kind of argument could be made in the case of a brahmin temple servant. I would thus maintain that if all or some of the preconditions to the devadasis' or the male *sebākas*' performance of their ritual role listed by Madan are absent, it is not the auspiciousness of the situation which disappears but simply its 'rightness' or 'appropriateness'. More specifically, I think that the same kind of argument could be made when it is a matter of purity rather than of auspiciousness which is involved. As Madan himself

remarks, the passage of time is central to the notions of purity and pollution (in this case *sauca* and *asauca*) as well: 'to be cleansed of pollution when the same is unavoidable, one has not only to wash but to do so *immediately*, for example, after evacuation or *after the lapse of a period of time*, as following a birth or death in the family' (ibid.:15, emphasis added).

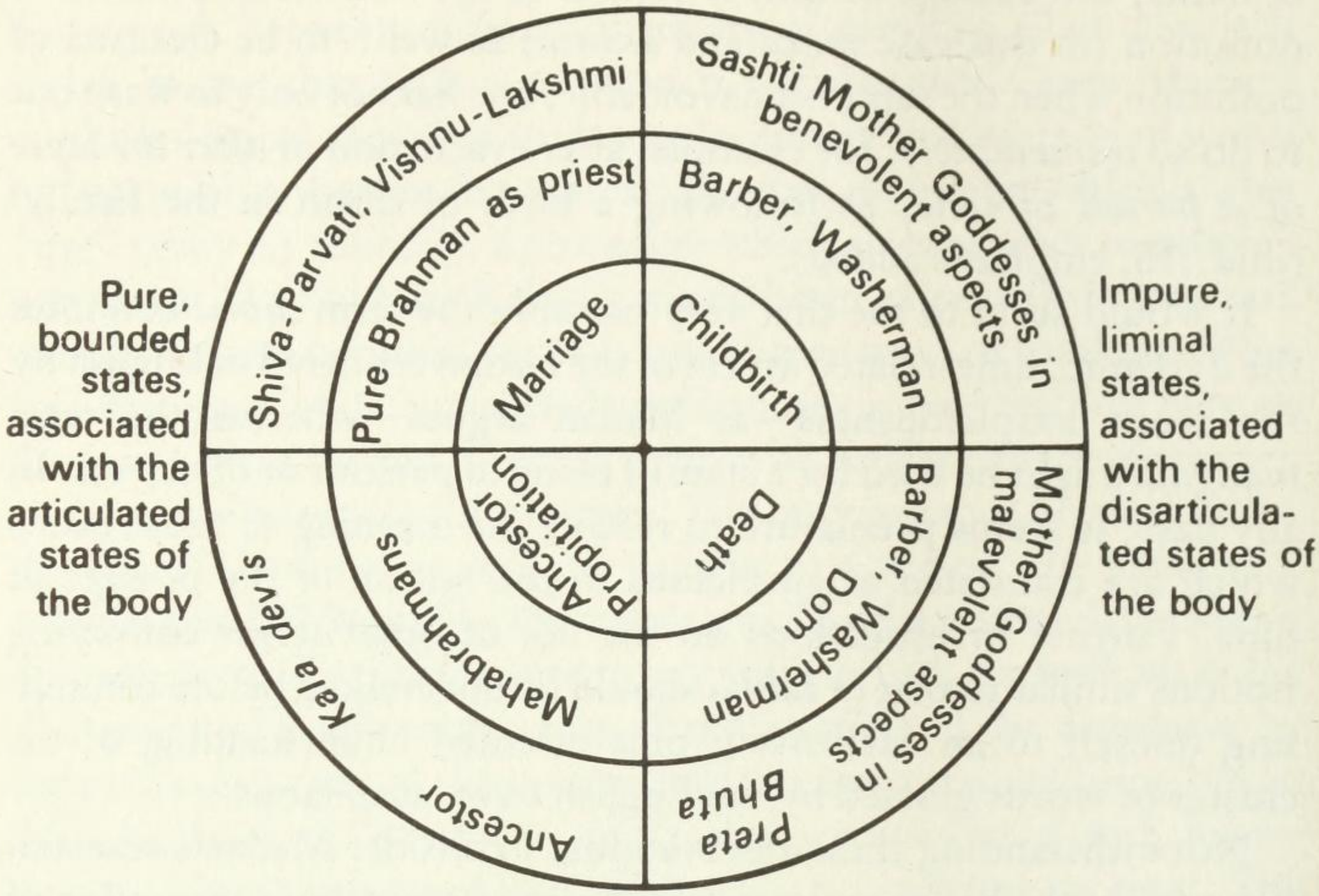
It would seem to me that very possibly the term *śubha* connotes the dynamic, time-related aspect of the notion rendered in English by the word auspiciousness—as Madan argues—whereas the term *mangaḷa* might be used for a state of being of persons or of objects. In any case, it seems premature to restrict the meaning of those terms which are translated as auspicious to the notion of the passage of time. Further investigations on the use of other terms conveying notions similar to that of *śubha* should be undertaken before committing oneself to an exclusively time-oriented understanding of the cluster of words glossed by the English term 'auspicious'.

Notwithstanding these reservations, I consider Madan's research to be an invaluable contribution to the understanding of the notion of auspiciousness. His study of the various uses of the word *śubha* raises the level of scholarly discourse on the issue, pointing as it does towards the necessity for similarly fine-grained linguistic inquiries to be undertaken for other related terms.

In the revised edition of her book, Veena Das (1982) has added an epilogue in which she rephrases her earlier analyses in terms of the auspicious/inauspicious and purity/impurity axes. Like Madan's model, her model does not include the transcendental aspect of these two axes, thus yielding a less complex model than the one proposed by Carman. Following Madan, Das associates auspiciousness and inauspiciousness with events; unlike him, however, she identifies these terms with the opposites of life and death:

> . . . auspicious events may be said to be associated with life, and are represented by the right side of the body, while inauspicious events may be said to be associated with death, and are represented by the left side of the body . . .
> . . . the categories of auspicious and inauspicious [. . .] seem to me to refer respectively to events involving life and future, and events involving death and the termination of a future . . . (Veena Das 1982:143–4).

The following diagram, taken from Veena Das' new epilogue, summarizes her findings (1982:143):



Even though she does not title the bottom end of her vertical axis, the rest of the diagram leads us to expect that it represents 'Inauspicious activities associated with death and the left hand'. Childbirth is placed in the auspicious/impure quadrant, death in the inauspicious/impure one and ancestor worship in the inauspicious/pure one. These classifications differ both from Madan's and my own findings. Madan has argued that it is not birth or death itself which are auspicious or inauspicious but their occurrence under a conjunction of other events, especially planetary ones:

> Now, childbirth, particularly the birth of a son, is normally an auspicious event, but it may not be so always. The configuration of *graha* and *nakṣatra* at the time of his birth may make a particular son a menace to the well-being of his parents and, therefore, his birth is considered to be an inauspicious event (Madan 1980:8).

Vasudha Narayanan has also pointed out that death is not always an inauspicious event. If death occurs to a woman whose children, especially sons, and whose husband, are alive, it is considered auspicious. If it occurs to a man of advanced age whose wife has predeceased him and whose children are alive, it is also not considered inauspicious

(Narayanan 1980). Thus death does not always—and perhaps only in the case of the death of the last male in a patrilineal line of descent, signalling the end of a line (*bangsa śesa*)—signify the termination of a future. Similarly a new life may threaten the future.

As far as ancestor propitiation is concerned, my own interpretation of Ratha Jātrā and the role of the *daitā*s leads me to understand it as being at once auspicious *and* inauspicious. I have argued that the *daitā*s correspond to the category of ancestors; they are the ones who attend simultaneously to the illness and rejuvenation of the deities, as well as to their 'birth' and 'death'. For me the powers of the *daitā*s are fertile and ambiguous. Life emerges from death, the latter conceived of as a sleep in the womb. I have further argued that the prohibition on having children which applies to the devadasis must be understood in terms of the inherently ambiguous nature of birth. The devadasis unambiguously signify auspiciousness and they are hence separated from birth. This is signified spatially during Naba Kalebara when the *daitā*s are fashioning new images in a closed temporary structure and the devadasis sing auspicious songs outside of it without being allowed to enter or even see the goings-on inside.

These differences between Das' findings and my own are more than differences in ethnographic data; they are methodological. Das conceives of the opposition between life and death in terms of a structural binary opposition. Such oppositions are exclusive in nature: there is a clear boundary between the two opposites which prevents their conceptualization as being fused into one category. This is how Das puts it: '. . . the sacred associated with life is kept completely separate from the sacred associated with death, as the injunction that no weddings should be performed in the month of *shraddha* when ancestors are propitiated' (1977:120).

The evidence for the ambiguous nature of the ancestor propitiation ceremony can be found in Das' own material. In her description of the ancestor propitiation ceremony she writes:

> For instance, there are three pits which are dug for ancestors in a special enclosure during the annual propitiating ceremony. In the middle pit, oblations are made with the formula, 'adoration to you, O Father, for the sake of terror, for the sake of sap' and this oblation has to be offered by turning the palm of the left hand upwards. But in the other two oblations which are made at the first and third pit, the formulae say 'Adoration to you, O Father, for the sake of life and vital breath' and 'Adoration to you, O Fathers, for the sake of comfort'. These two oblations have to be made with the palm of the right hand turned upwards (ibid.:97).

It is clear that ancestors are propitiated for both life and death since both the right and the left hands are used. More interestingly, however, when the ancestors are invoked for the sake of 'terror and sap' with the left hand the two opposites are mingled. Das seems to ignore this, and interprets the passage as an association between the left and appeasement of beings who can cause terror and discomfort and the right with the good and benevolent. The left-handed oblation, however, is done not only for terror but also for sap. Sap is the vital fluid of plants and by metaphorical extension the vital fluid of humans also. In one gesture and utterance we have here the mingling of life-promoting forces and death-inspired forces. There can be no categorical separation between life and death; the two opposites can at times be found fused together. Furthermore, as Madan's and Narayanan's data show, the two opposites of life and death are not always associated with a positive and a negative pole respectively.

The opposition between auspiciousness and inauspiciousness is not an exclusive binary one, but one that lacks a fixed boundary between the two poles. Such lack of separation or boundary between signs allows them to carry meanings of dynamism such as the flow of time, processes of growth, maturation, and decay, or a dynamic force like *śakti*. Das' diagram obscures these facts; the auspicious/inauspicious opposition cannot be rendered graphically as an axis with two opposite poles, one positive and the other negative.

In contrast to the auspicious/inauspicious axis, the pure/impure axis in Das' diagram does indeed represent an exclusive binary opposition. Purity representing bounded states associated with the articulated states of the body and impurity representing liminal states associated with the disarticulated states of the body represent those aspects of purity and impurity which correspond to Mary Douglas' theory of pollution. These aspects of the pure/impure opposition, however, convey only a partial understanding of these two categories. As Tambiah (1974) has argued, Douglas' theory of pollution applies to the Indian case only in the context of relationships in what he calls 'the reverse order of castes'—*pratiloma*, from low to high. In such a context, a 'hierarchical ' principle is at play corresponding to Douglas' theory of pollution in which classes are kept separate and bounded. This context corresponds—among other things—to hypogamous (*pratiloma*) unions between men of inferior status and women of superior status; the products of such unions are abhorred, they are outcastes.

In other contexts, however, the opposition between the pure and the impure is not an exclusive binary one and signifies a different set of meanings. In the context of what Tambiah (ibid.) has called 'the direct order of castes'—*anuloma*, from high to low—the opposition embodies the 'key' principle. Such a principle 'generates new classes by mixing or overlapping [. . .] prior classes' (Tambiah 1974:192). Basing his remarks on the rules concerning sexual unions in the *dharmaśāstra* literature, Tambiah shows how unions in the direct order of castes between a man of a superior caste and a woman of an inferior caste are permitted and generate new categories, new *jatis*.

I have argued (Marglin 1977) that the key principle can also be found in realms other than that of sexual unions such as occupations and wealth. In those contexts, the relationship between the pure and the impure expresses the privileges which the superior castes enjoy at the expense of the inferior castes. When the overlaps or transfers from the pure (high) to the impure (low) are closely examined, a principle of dominance and privilege clearly emerges. Whenever the dominion of the superior over the inferior requires it, there can be boundary overflows without creation of pollution. This whole set of meanings conveyed by the pure/impure opposition is absent from Das' conceptualization which is methodologically constrained by the structuralist view of binary oppositions.

It is necessary at this point to inquire whether the key principle relates opposites in a manner which would correspond to my understanding of the auspicious/inauspicious opposition. I would argue that it does not; in the cases of mixing which exemplify the key principle such as that of *anuloma* unions, the result is not the creation of a category in which the pure and the impure are found simultaneously, but the creation of a new class which is pure in relation to inferior classes and impure in relation to superior classes. The key principle creates a multiplicity of categories, all being pure and impure relative to each other. In contrast, when one considers, for example, the category of ancestor worship, one is faced with a phenomenon in which the auspicious and the inauspicious coexist. I want to emphasize that the coexistence of the auspicious and the inauspicious in ancestor worship, among other phenomena, does not obliterate the opposition by creating a new category. The tension remains between the auspicious and the inauspicious. I would argue that it is precisely this tension, found when the auspicious and the inauspicious coexist, that renders the phenomenon powerful in a

certain way. When the *daitā*s during the *aṇasara* period of Ratha Jātrā, both attend to the deities' illness as well as rejuvenate them, the coexistence of both auspiciousness and inauspiciousness has a transformative effect of renewal. I would propose to identify the opposition between the auspicious and the inauspicious as exemplifying a 'transformative principle'.

Methodologically, the transformative principle can be thought of as the opposite of the hierarchical principle which generates exclusive binary oppositions. We have thus two oppositions and three principles. Since the hierarchical and the key principle pertaining to the pure/impure opposition have been adequately discussed elsewhere (Tambiah 1974, Marglin 1977), I will focus on the transformative principle pertaining to the auspicious/inauspicious opposition. In order to elucidate the properties of this principle, I will illustrate it with an iconography rather than with a diagram. Iconographies can convey richer and subtler meanings than diagrams since they are not only iconic but also symbolic[4]. I propose that the iconography of a snake whose head is joined to its tail captures well the intended meanings. It is especially appropriate since snakes are associated with ancestor worship as well as with a vital force as in the visual representations of *kuṇḍalinī* as a snake. In tantric yoga, *kuṇḍalinī* is visualized as a female snake which represents the energies of the adept. I find such visualization particularly felicitous for several reasons: the joining of the head and the tail corresponds to the fact that the opposites of auspiciousness and inauspiciousness are sometimes found together, just as the head can be found joined to its opposite, the tail. Furthermore, the force which this snake signifies is female, just like the transformative force signified by the opposition of the auspicious and the inauspicious, namely *śakti*, is female. Plate 8 reproduces an example of contemporary iconography from Banaras of *kuṇḍalinī* coiled around a *liṅgaṁ*, (Rawson 1973).

This iconography conveys richer meanings than I have alluded to. I would suggest that this iconography signifies both dynamic and static characteristics. The snake with its tail joined to its head signifies the transformative principle of the auspicious and the inauspicious. When these two opposites are found together as in the *aṇasara* period of Ratha Jātrā, they signify a potent moment, full of possibilities. The moment is a dangerous one precisely because of its potentiality which can resolve itself in either of the two directions, towards auspiciousness and renewal or towards inauspiciousness and decay. I would

suggest that the iconography of *kuṇḍalinī* coiled around a *liṅgaṁ* conveys both the transformative moment as well as its resolution towards the auspicious pole. The resolution is signified by the snake embracing the *liṅgaṁ*. The snake is female and the *liṅgaṁ* is male; the union of the two is the resolution into the stable state of auspiciousness. We find here the same symbolism as that of the auspicious *maithuna*, the couple united in sexual embrace, the auspicious devadasi who signifies kingship, the king being the embodiment of both female and male characteristics and powers (see Chapter 5, the coronation ceremony, as well as Marglin 1981). The auspiciousness of the devadasi, as everyone told me, also resides in the fact that she can never become a widow; she can never be dis-united from her Lord. Female power, *śakti*, signifies the potency of the joining of both auspiciousness and inauspiciousness. In union with a male, the potentiality has resolved itself in a positive direction. This explains why goddesses represented along with their consorts are benevolent, whereas goddesses represented alone are sometimes benevolent and sometimes malevolent. The resolution of the potentiality in a positive or a negative direction seems to depend on a conjunction of happenings; this is where Madan's findings throw an illuminating light on this issue. The auspiciousness of the event of birth depends on a particular astrological configuration.

I would suggest though, that the union of the male and the female, be it a sexual one or an androgynous one, signifies the static state of auspiciousness. Birth and death can be either auspicious or inauspicious, since they are both the result of female energy, *śakti*. Their resolution into one or the other pole depends on a conjunction of astrological or other events.

Part II: Implications for the Understanding of Women

The study of the practices of the devadasis has thrown light not only on this well-known, if not notorious, institution, but also on the meaning of the life of women in general.

According to the principle of the pure and the impure, women seem to be devalued, subjugated to the will of men, in a word, inferior. Viewed from the perspective of the values of auspiciousness

and inauspiciousness, women are seen in a very different light. They are the creators and the maintainers of life, the sources of prosperity, well-being, and pleasure. Furthermore, they are the ones upon whom a man's fulfillment of the three aims of life—*dharma*, *artha*, and *kāma*—depend. The etymology of the word *śakti* relates it to the Sanskrit root *sak*-,[5] a verbal root meaning 'to be able to'. The *śakti* is the one who enables a man to act, to be a *karttā*, that is 'a doer'. The wife is the very embodiment of Laksmī.

In the hierarchical perspective of the principle of the pure and the impure, women are inferior to men. The principle of the auspicious and the inauspicious is non-hierarchical. Women in that perspective are all of one kind, like the earth. Their blessings are given in the same measure, regardless of their caste. Prosperity, offspring, pleasure are not caste-bound. Women as the increasers and maintainers of life as well as the source of the power which enables men to act are outside a hierarchical scheme altogether. It is futile to attempt to categorize women's role in the Hindu world one dimensionally. Under certain circumstances and for certain purposes, the hierarchical and patriarchal principle is at work. Under other circumstances and for other purposes a non-hierarchical principle is at work. It is difficult to say which principle dominates; both aspects of women are explicitly recognized in the culture, as the two passages from Manu quoted in Part I of this conclusion illustrate so well. It cannot be said that the positive view of women, being mainly applicable in the domestic realm, is therefore inferior to the negative view of women which mostly applies to the public realm. The devalorization of the domestic realm *vis-à-vis* the public realm is indeed a marked feature of Western capitalist societies. It is, however, not the case in the Hindu world. The model for the role of the king and for the kingdom as a whole is that of the wife and of the domestic realm.

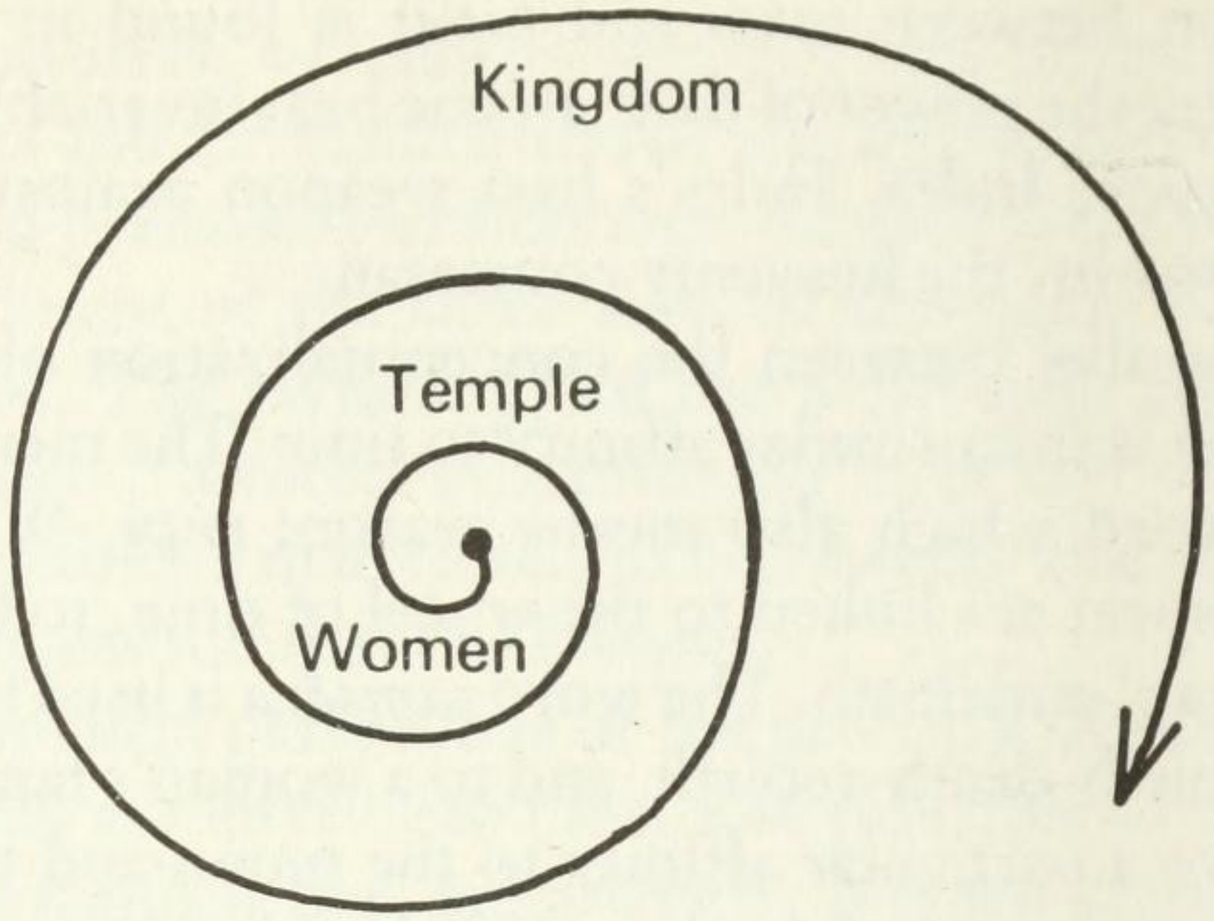
The king is conceptualized as the increaser and the maintainer of his people. At his coronation he is symbolically infused with female procreative powers. On him depends the prosperity and well-being of his people who are also called his 'progeny' (*prajā*). Royal power is *śakti* power.[6] The king is particularly responsible for the fertility of the land in the form of good and timely rains, a role parallel to that of the courtesan or the devadasi who by her sexual activity vanquishes the drying powers of ascetic heat. Royal power and female power (*śakti*) are opposed to the power of the ascetic (*tapas*). The ascetic or the renouncer strictly separates himself from women. Mythically,

the opposition between *śakti* and *tapas* is found in the stories of ascetics who by the power of their ascetic heat invariably threaten the king of the gods, Indra. Indra's best weapon against the threat of *tapas* is the *apsaras*, the heavenly courtesan.

Another parallel between the conceptualization of the king and that of women is their similar affinity to time. The menstrual cycle is called by a word which also means season: *rutu*. Women in their procreative aspect are linked to the wheel of time, to birth, growth, maturity, decay, and death. The word *saṃsāra* is used to refer both to the wheel of birth-death-rebirth, and to a woman's family. Kings for their part have a particular affinity to the moon and to the sun, the makers of the night and of the day. This double linkage of kingship to female sexuality and to time finds a sublime expression in the temple of Konarak. This temple, built in the 13th century by the first Ganga ruler to use the dynastic title of Gajapati, Narasiṃha I, is conceived in the form of the chariot of the sun. The temple is flanked by twelve exquisitely carved wheels, one for each of the solar months, and drawn by a team of horses, carved in stone. In small friezes running all around the temple, rows upon rows of elephants are depicted, along with the king—the lord of the elephants—and other royal scenes. Innumerable erotic scenes, one lovelier than the next, surround the outside walls of the temple. These include the 'amorous sport of ascetics' (*tapasvilīlā*), scenes no doubt placed there to ensure that no drought will plague the realm. In front of the temple stands the hall of dance, as a separate structure. It is covered with a veritable stone anthology of Oḍissi dance, representing the dancing and music making of the devadasis. (see Pls. 18–21).

The model of woman and of the domestic sphere does not only underlie conceptions of kingship; it lies also at the heart of temple worship. The ritual day in the temple is modelled along the lines of the domestic round. Sleeping, bathing, dressing, feeding, and so forth are its main activities. The priests of the temple liken themselves to women and explicitly point out the parallel nature of their duties and the duties of the wife. Women and the domestic sphere seem to be in the Hindu life-world the potent core of an outward growing spiral (see next page).

Women are at the center; their concerns, the creating and maintaining of life are highly valued in this culture, since they form the model for other concerns of the public realm. This configuration is in stark contrast to that in the Western tradition where man and his



man-made artefacts seem to be at the center, relegating women and their concerns to the margins. To borrow Roy Wagner's expression, Western cultures do not much value the 'doing of life' (1977:500) but rather the 'making of things'.

The procreative powers of women are ambivalent; they are linked both to the ancestors and to new life; they reach into the past as well as into the future. Time is similarly two-valued; there is auspicious time and inauspicious time. Time is not neutral. Its variation is controlled by the movement of the heavenly bodies and gives rise to the specialized knowledge of astrology. Astrologers are regularly consulted on many matters of everyday concern in order to establish which periods will be auspicious and which one inauspicious. Persons, as they go through life, are influenced by the planets. This influence of the planets and the stars on the destiny of persons is totally separate from a person's caste status. To cast a horoscope, an astrologer will not ask a person's caste; the only information he needs is the precise time and place of birth.[7] Time is not a dimension which like the species of social and other groupings lends itself to gradations of ranking. Conceptualizations of time are outside a hierarchical scheme, outside the realm in the Hindu life-world in which the principle of the pure and the impure are at play.

Those sectarian movements in which the principle of the auspicious and the inauspicious is central, namely Bhakti and Tantra, offer salvation equally to men and to women. In more classical forms of Brahmanism, the path to salvation is open only to twice-born men. Both Bhakti and Tantra de-emphasize—if not downright devalue—hierarchy. In both traditions, feminine symbolism predominates. For Tantrics, every woman is an embodiment of the great Śakti,

whereas for Bhaktas women are seen as being naturally better suited to love God than men are (Ramanujan 1982). In that tradition men must strive to feel and think as women in order to experience the greatest possible closeness to God. In some forms of late medieval Bhakti cults, the female principle in the form of Rādhā emerges as the dominant one, the godhead becoming feminine (MacKenzie-Brown 1974).

The sexual imagery which abounds in both these traditions draw upon the meanings of female sexuality and fertility; these can be manipulated to achieve symbolically a transcendence of time. It is disheartening to still find in scholarly works such negative terminology as 'orgy' being used when discussing Tantric rituals. Such terminology speaks much more eloquently of the Judeo-Christian moral condemnation of female sexuality than of Hindu values.

Female sexuality is viewed positively in the perspective of the values of auspiciousness and inauspiciousness. In Amrapalli's Vaishnavite interpretation of the evening ritual, the love-making between Krishna and the *gopīs* speaks both of a transcendence of time and an abolition of hierarchy. But the world of Krishna's *līlā* in Brundāban cannot exist in normal time. Krishna eventually leaves the country of Braj to go and reside in the city of Dwārikā. There he marries eight queens and becomes a sovereign. In this world, the non-hierarchical principle of the auspicious and the inauspicious is inextricably inter-woven with the hierarchical principle of the pure and the impure.

Notes

INTRODUCTION

1 From now on I will use this term without diacritical marks since it has become part of the Indian–English lexicon.

2 For the history of Indian dance see Kapila Vatsyayan, *Indian Classical Dance*, 1968.

3 On the real author of this work see Sylvia Murr, 'Nicolas Jacques Desvaulx (1745–1823) véritable auteur des "Mœurs Institutions et Cérémonies des Peuples de l'Inde" ' in *Puruṣārtha*, Vol. 3, 1977.

4 Abbé J. A. Dubois, *Description of the character, manners, and customs of the people of India*, Madras, London, Calcutta, Bombay, 1879. (Reprinted from the original edition, London, 1817, pp. 387–9, 405.)

5 The word *bayadère* is the French version of the Portuguese word *balladeira* meaning 'dancing woman'; in French it refers specifically to the Indian devadasis.

6 I am deeply grateful to Professor Frykenberg for having sent me copies of the relevant portions of the *Madura Mail*. These were copied by one of his students while she was doing historical research in South India.

7 The legislation passed in Madras in 1947 was not the first one of its kind. Two princely states passed similar legislations much earlier; Mysore in 1910 and Travancore in 1930 (see R. Singha and R. Massey, *Indian Dances: Their History and Growth*, 1967). The only such law passed in British territory was in Bombay in 1934 (see J. Panakal, 'Prostitution in India', *Indian Journal of Criminology* 2:29–35, 1974. I am grateful to Kathy and Adrian L'Armand for the foregoing information.)

The text of the Madras legislation is as follows:

Madras Act No. XXXI of 1947. [The Madras Devadasis (Prevention of Dedication) Act, 1947.] (Received the assent of the Governor-General on 17 January 1948; first published in the Fort St. George Gazette on 27 January 1948.)

An Act to prevent the dedication of women as devadasis in the Province of Madras.

Whereas the practice still prevails in certain parts of the Province of Madras of dedicating women as 'devadasis' to Hindu deities, idols, objects of worship, temple, and other religious institutions;

And Whereas such practice, however ancient and pure in its origin, leads many of the women so dedicated to a life of prostitution;

And Whereas it is necessary to put an end to the practice;

It is hereby enacted as follows:

1. (1) This Act may be called the Madras Devadasis (Prevention of Dedication) Act, 1947.

(2) It extends to the whole of the [State] of Madras.

2. In this Act, unless there is anything repugnant in the subject or context—

(a) 'dedication' means the performance of any ceremony, by whatever name called, by which a woman is dedicated to the service of a Hindu deity, idol, object of worship, temple or other religious institution, and includes '*pottukattu*', '*gajjepuja*', '*mudri*', and dancing by '*Kumbhaharathy*';

(b) 'devadasi' means any woman so dedicated;

(c) 'woman' means a female of any age.

3. (1) The dedication of a woman as a devadasi, whether before or after the commencement of this Act and whether she has consented to such dedication or not, is hereby declared unlawful and void; and any woman so dedicated shall not thereby be deemed to have become incapable of entering into a valid marriage.

Nothing contained in this sub-section shall be deemed to affect the operation of [section 34 of the Madras Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Act, 1951] or the rights to which a devadasi is entitled under that section.

(2) Any custom or usage prevailing in any Hindu community such as the Bogum, Kalavanthula, Sani, Nagavasulu, Devadasi and Kurmapulu, that a woman of that community who gives or takes part in any melam (nautch), dancing or music performance in the course of any procession or otherwise is thereby regarded as having adopted a life of prostitution and becomes incapable of entering into a valid marriage and the performance of any ceremony or act in accordance with any such custom or usage, whether before or after the commencement of this Act and whether the woman concerned has consented to such performance or not, are hereby declared unlawful and void.

(3) Dancing by a woman, with or without *kumbhaharathy*, in the precincts of any temple or other religious institution, or in any procession of a Hindu deity, idol or object of worship installed in any such temple or institution or at any festival or ceremony held in respect of such a deity, idol or object of worship, is hereby declared unlawful.

4. (1) Any person having attained the age of sixteen years who after the commencement of this Act performs, permits, takes part in, or abets the performance of any ceremony or act for dedicating a woman as a devadasi or any ceremony or act of the nature referred to in section 3, sub-section (2), shall be punishable with simple imprisonment for a term which may extend to six months or with fine which may extend to five hundred rupees, or with both.

Explanation: The person referred to in this section shall include the woman in respect of whom such ceremony or act is performed.

(2) Any person having attained the age of sixteen years who dances in contravention of the provisions of section 3, sub-section (3), or who abets dancing in contravention of the said provisions, shall be punishable with simple imprisonment for a term which may extend to six months or with a fine which may extend to five hundred rupees, or with both.

5. No court inferior to that of a Presidency Magistrate or a Magistrate of the First Class shall inquire into or try any offence punishable under section 4.

The Madras Code Vol. III. Unrepealed Madras Acts 1922 to 1948, Government of Madras Law Department, 1958, pp. 795–7.

8 The state took control of the temple at that time. However, the king's uncle told me that his older brother, who was then king, sued the state at that time in an attempt to regain control of the temple. While the suit was pending the king retained control of the temple. The state won the case and took over fully the administration of the temple in 1963.

9 For a discussion of the treatment of the category of auspicious in the literature see the Conclusion, part I, pp. 282–300.

CHAPTER 1

PURI ENCOUNTERS

1 See Alice Boner and Sadasiva Rath Sarma, *Silpa Prakasa of Ramachandra Kaulacara* (translated and annotated), Leiden, 1966. Also by the same authors, *New Light on the Sun Temple of Konarak*, Varanasi, 1972.

CHAPTER 2

KINSHIP: MARRIED WOMEN AND DEVADASIS

1 Although the record of rights lists 118 separate ritual duties, many of these are grouped under one general heading. For example, among cooks (*suāras*), there will be many specific ritual duties named, such as cutting vegetables, being in charge of certain pots, doing the cooking in the kitchen of another temple in the compound, etc. When my informants referred to the temple servants as a group, they used the phrase: 'The 36 *nijoga*-s.' *Nijoga* refers to one of these general categories of ritual duties. I have not made a study of the temple organization, and I refer the reader to the unpublished Ph.D. thesis of J. Rösel, *Der Palast des Herrn der Welt*, 1976, Freiburg University.

The following is a list of the 36 *nijogas*, compiled by my collaborator with the help of several temple servants. Its accuracy cannot be guaranteed but it gives the reader an idea of the type of rituals and how they are categorized.

Brahmins:

1 chā mahāpātra; the most important servants: bhitaracha and talicha mahāpātra, who open and close the gates in the morning and evening.
2 purohita, not temple brahmins but śāsan brahmins. Perform the Vedic fire sacrifice in the kitchen every day.
3 pūjā paṇḍā; do the main offering.
4 simhāri or puśpālaka, bathe and decorate the deities.
5 baḍu sebāka; in charge of containers.
6 pati-mahāpātra; one person special duties during the car festival; said to belong to the suāra class.
7 pratihāri; watchmen.
8 mekāpa; in charge of various ritual objects.
9 suāra; cooks.
10 khuntiā; supply camphor and flowers to the simhāris.
11 chatāra; carry the umbrellas and fans.
12 haḍapa nāyaka; who bring the betel nuts.
13 pradhāni; calls the servants to their ritual.

14 sābuta nijoga; in charge of the 5 tīrthas where they offer oblation to the pilgrims' ancestors.

Non-brahmins

15 muduli (potter caste); in charge of mud seals.
16 daitā; descendants of tribal.
17 dutta-mukha simhāri; a daitā in charge of painting the face of the deities.
18 karaṇa; temple scribes.
19 ghatuāri; (garland-maker caste) play the gongs at the car festival.
20 mohābhoi (caste of cowherds); supply milk and milk products.
21 pāniā; (cultivator caste) bring water for kitchen.
22 bajantāri (musicians; several castes).
23 devadasis.
24 cakra dehurī (barber caste), places a lamp on the *cakra* which is at the top of the temple tower on certain days.
25 khumbāra biśoi (potter caste); supply earthen wares daily for the kitchen.
26 suānsiā (cultivator caste); servants of the cooks.
27 cunarā (lime maker caste); supplies lime for cleaning, also worships Garuda.
28 jyotiśa; astrologer.
29 baidya; physician of the deities.
30 bindhāni; goldsmith.
31 tīrtha mātiā sebāka; (cultivator caste).
32 ojhā mahāraṇā (carpenter caste); build the chariots.
33 cāpa beherā (boatman caste); row the boats at Candan festival.
34 aśva hasti sebāka (*khandāyat* caste); in charge of the temple elephant.
35 mahāsethi (washerman).
36 pāliā mahāra (sweeper).

2 In Bengali kinship terminology the same term *kutum* or *kutumba* does not refer to relatives by blood but to relatives by marriage. See Fruzzetti and Östör (1976:105).

3 One of the brothers died in 1976 after I had left Puri.

4 See Kane, *History of the Dharmaśāstras*, Vol. II, Part I, p. 444: 'If a person does not give away a maiden when she has reached her 12th year, his *pitṛs* have to drink every month her menstrual discharge (Parāśara VII, 6–9).'

5 The sister-in-law of the married daughter of Sahasrakhyi had been married as a pre-pubertal child to a temple servant whose wife had died. While the little girl was visiting her father-in-law's house, the husband tried to have intercourse with her. She cried out and was very upset. She was brought back to her parents' house where she told what happened. That night her father went into the husband's lane, called out some prominent men of the neighbourhood and told what had happened to his daughter. That very night the husband committed suicide writing a note that he had lost face.

6 The same point is made by Fruzzetti and Östör (1976:118): '*Matri bongso*: by this Bengalis do not mean generations of mothers but rather the generations of the mother's father.'

7 On the widespread practice of second or final funerals see Robert Hertz, *Death and the Right Hand*, 1960, first published in French in 1907.

8 Inden and Nicholas write that: 'Derived from the root *kṛ*, meaning "act," "make," "perform," "manage," the word *kartā* literally means "actor," ' 'he who inde-

pendently performs enjoined actions for his house (*gṛha*) and his bodily dependents (*parivāra-varga*).' In *Kingship in Bengali Culture*, 1976, pp. 6–7. They do not mention that a *kartā* needs a wife to play his role.

9 See Kane, ibid., Vol. II, Part I, p. 429: 'The wife enables the man to perform religious rites and is the mother of a son or sons who were supposed to save a man from hell.' Kane then quotes Manu IX 28: 'On the wife depend the procreation of sons, the performance of religious rites, service, highest pleasures, heaven for oneself and for one's ancestors.'

Ibid., p. 579, quoting Varāhamihira (6th century AD) in Bṛhat Samhitā chapter 74: '. . . . On women depend *dharma* and *artha* and from them man derives the pleasures of sense and the blessings of sons.'

Similarly, there was a belief that there was no hope of going to heaven for a woman who died unmarried. Ibid., pp. 443–4: 'It came to be believed that there was no hope of heaven for a woman who died unmarried. In the Salya parva chapter 52 we have the story of a girl, daughter of Kuṇi, Garga, who practised severe penance till she reached old age and yet was told by Nārada that if she died unmarried she would not go to heaven. The woman induced Sṛngavat of the Gālava family for a day previous to her death to marry her by the promise of giving him half of her merit (*puṇya*). The Vaikhānasa smārta sūtra (V.9), while describing the ceremony of funeral rites in cases of distress, mentions the curious practice of finding out a male of the same caste for a girl who dies unmarried though of the age of puberty, with whom a sort of marriage is gone through and the girl is cremated.'

10 For an insightful discussion of *dharma*, see Van Buitenen 'Dharma and Mokṣa', *Philosophy East and West* (Honolulu), 1957.

11 One of my informants called turmeric an 'auspicious sign' (*śubha lakhyana*). Turmeric powder mixed with oil is massaged on both the bride and the groom before the wedding. At the wedding ritual itself, before the crucial part of tying the hands together, the forearms and the hands of both bride and groom are also rubbed with turmeric. At the puberty ritual of a girl when she takes her purificatory bath she is also rubbed with turmeric. Turmeric is only used during auspicious (*śubha*, *mangaḷa*) ceremonies.

12 It must not be imagined from this that women are drastically isolated. The houses in Puri's old lanes are all contiguous and have backdoors and terraces. One visits through the terraces with one's neighbours up and down the lane. Gossip has it that a lot of visiting, some of it not very legitimate, takes place through the backdoors and the terraces. There is a lively women's social life which takes place outside of the public street and temple. When I visited my friends many of the women neighbours—at least at the beginning—came through the terraces to have a look at me.

13 Fruzzetti and Östör's paper, 'Seed and Earth: A Cultural Analysis of Kinship in a Bengali Town', *CIS*, 1976, paints a picture very similar to the one that I briefly describe here.

14 See Manu V:108: '. . . . is purified . . . a woman whose thoughts have been impure by the menstrual secretion.' In Bühler (1969:188).

15 I was several times given the examples of Śakuntala in the Mahābhārata and of Sītā in the Rāmāyaṇa to illustrate this point.

16 These widows had become *mātā*-s. These are women, widows or women who have been abandoned by their husbands, who join a monastery (*matha*) and live there

doing the *sebā* of the head of the monastery, the *mahanta*, and of his disciples. However, as long as their husbands are alive, their first duty is to him and they are thus not able to become *mātā*-s.

17 Purdah is not as many believe a custom brought in by the Muslims or the British, as the following passage from the Sanskrit play *The Little Clay Cart* (translated by Van Buitenen, 1968) shows; the courtesan Vasantasenā at the end of the play is bestowed the title of wife by the king:

> Sarvilaka: My lady Vasantasenā, the king is pleased to confer on you the title of wife.
> Vasantasenā: I am grateful, my lord.
> Sarvilaka (*after veiling Vasantasenā*, to Cārudatta): What shall we do for the friar? (*The Little Clay Cart*, p. 179).

This play is dated by the translator as belonging to the early Gupta period, i.e., the beginning of the 4th century AD.

18 I was told of a practice current in the villages of the district of Ganjam just to the south of the district of Puri. After the marriage ceremony is finished on the fourth day which is the day of consummation, the priest or the *mahant* or the *guru* is the first one to spend that night with the bride. This is considered very auspicious because the priest takes away whatever dangerous powers there may be in the virgin. This was compared to the practice of sprinkling water around the food one is about to eat while reciting mantras so that whatever 'poison gaze' (*biśa druṣṭi*) or evil eye (*kudruṣṭi*) might have been cast on the food will be neutralized.

See also M. R. Allen, 'Kumari or "virgin" worship in Kathmandu Valley', 1976, p. 312: 'The virgin girl, though highly rated for her natural purity, is nevertheless a threat to men and to male sexuality.'

19 In Puri an impotent man is called a 'Candrasena'.

20 See S. Sorenson, *An Index to Names in the Mahābhārata*, 1904, p. 434.

21 See W. O'Flaherty, *Hindu Myths*, 1975, p. 247.

22 Also ibid., p. 241. See Chapter 6 for this myth.

23 For a detailed discussion of why different foods are differently vulnerable to pollution, see F. Apffel Marglin, 'Power, Purity and Pollution: The Caste System Reconsidered', 1977.

24 Inden also shows how the coded substance can be transformed through women by contracting the proper marriages. See *Marriage and Rank in Bengali Culture*, 1976, Chapter 3.

25 I here use the ethnographic present. But as I pointed out in Chapter one, the devadasis have married their daughters and unless something is done by the temple administration rather soon, this tradition will disappear with this generation of devadasis.

26 The *daitās* and the *suāras* are said not to have this ceremony. The explanation given in the case of the *daitās* is that they are Jagannātha's own people, i.e., his agnatic kin, and he was their deity before the king discovered the cult. The temple dedication ceremony is done by the order of the king. The *suāras* are said to be the descendants from the marriage between the tribal chief's daughter Lalitā and Vidyāpati, the brahmin priest of the king who was sent to fetch the image.

27 Here again I am using the ethnographic present. Today one petitions the temple

administrator. My informants—the devadasis, the *rājagurus* and my temple servants friends—spoke like that as if this were still done today.

28 The wholeness of the body—a requirement for all temple servants—has to do with purity. For a full argument on this point see my article 'Power, Purity and Pollution', n. 23.

29 This is as complete a list of castes as I was able to gather in Puri, but it is probably not an exhaustive one.

The major cleavage is between touchable and untouchable castes (*chuā* and *achuā*). Among the former there is another major line of cleavage between the castes that can give water as well as food cooked in ghee to brahmins and those castes that cannot. The former are called *pāṇiśprusya* or *pāṇi chuā*, literally meaning water touching, and the latter are called *pāṇiaśprusya* or *pāṇiachuā* (not touching water).

Among the former group there is a marked division, although one not expressed by a particular word, between the four highest castes and the rest. The four highest castes are, in descending rank order: brahmins, kshatriya (the royal families), karaṇa, traditionally the scribes, still important today in education and the administration as they were under the kings; khandāyat, the soldiers in the king's army who were given lands by the kings. Only the brahmin and the kshatriya are twice born. All the other castes are śūdra.

Below these four castes one finds the cultivating and landowning castes: casā, also called pradhāna, they are one of the largest castes. Then come five specialist castes which are the jyotiśa, astrologer; bārika or nāpita, the barber; gāura, the cowherds; guḍiā, the sweet makers; and māli the gardeners and garland makers.

In the touchable but non-water giving group are the following artisan castes (no attempt is made to rank order them):
teli (oilman); kamāra (blacksmith); baniā (silversmith); keūta (fisherman); chuḍā keūta (makers of flattened rice); kumbhāra (potter); tanti (weaver); māhāraṇā (sellers of wood); kansāri (bell metal maker); sundhi (wine makers); kācarā (glass bangle maker); pānarā (pān seller); chunarā (lime maker); sankhāri (shell bangle maker); baḍhei (carpenter); pātarā (cloth merchant); sunāri (goldsmith); chitrakāra (painters); pathuriā (stone cutters); tuḷābhiṇa (cotton carders).

In the untouchable group one finds the following castes: Dhobā (washerman); bāuri (landless labourer); kandarā (landless labourer); mochi (leather worker); doma (basket weaver); hāḍi (sweeper); pāṇa (?); nuliā (Telugu migrant fisherman).

30 The duty of carceita is to call other *sebāka*-s when it is their turn to perform their duties in the temple and to make sure that they are on time.

31 I have seen only the former being done but I witnessed just two weddings. I have been told about other weddings in which the seven knots are said to be tied in a cloth spread over the bride and groom.

32 L. D. Anantha Krishna Iyer's article 'Devadasis in South India: Their Traditional Origin and Development', *Man in India*, 1927, is based (without proper acknowledgements) on a report in the 1901 Madras Census by Francis. In it, it is written that the dāsīs were 'married to a sword or a god, the tāli being tied around their necks by some men of their caste', p. 48.

33 This information was given to me by Radha. It was also told to me by the *dei* and by Trinayana.

34 This is what Das writes: 'From the ancient times the kings were responsible for the

manufacture of salt and collection of salt tax. Kautilya's Arthasastra, the Mahabharata in the Shanti Parva (29, 69), the Amarakosa (VI, 104–6) mention salt tax as a source of royal revenue. Some of the Satabahana inscriptions and the post-Gupta epigraphs refer to the king's supervisory authority over manufacture of salt for enhancing royal income. The literary works like the Jatakas (Vol. I, No. 202–11, 310), the Arthasastra (II, 12, 26–46), the Mahavasya of Patanjali (I, 127, II, 330, III, 158) and Charaka-Samhita (Su. I, 70, 9, 20) testify to the fact that salt produced from the oceanic water was exported to the Asiatic countries, along with textiles, perfumes, rice and other necessities of life.

'The introduction of farming system in land-revenue collection led the Ganga rulers of Orissa to appoint a salt-tax collector who used to collect taxes from the producers as well as from the traders. Kapilendradeva (1435–67), the Gajapati sovereign of Orissa who was also the king of the Nimki Mahals (salt producing tracts) once remitted the taxes which were levied on salt and cowries to enlist support of the salt-producing landholders and salt merchants and also to ameliorate the misery of the people', *Studies in the Economic History of Orissa from Ancient Times to 1833*, Calcutta, 1978, pp. 258–9.

35 On *Śulka* see S. Tambiah: 'Dowry and Bridewealth and the Property Rights of Women in South Asia,' in Goody and Tambiah, *Bridewealth and Dowry*, Cambridge University Press, 1973, pp. 1–58.

36 See also Viṣṇu dharma śāstra quoted in Tambiah (1974:211) about wives and slaves observing death pollution for their masters for an equal length of time.

37 This information was given to me by the younger brother of the king of Mayurbhanj.

38 Another name found in the inscription is *deva gaṇikā*. *Gaṇikā* is still used today sometimes to designate the *māhārī*. See S. N. Rajaguru, *Inscriptions of Orissa*, Vol. V, Part 2, p. 382.

39 The Bhauma Kara dynasty ruled Orissa from the 8th century to the middle of the 10th century when the Somavamsa dynasty overruled it and it was itself defeated in the 12th century by the Gangas who represent the 'golden age' of Orissa, which lasted till the beginning of the 15th century. See Chapter 4.

40 See *Journal of Bihar and Orissa Historical Research Society*, Vol. II, Part 1, p. 419ff.

41 See S. N. Rajaguru *Ins. of Orissa*, Vol. IV, p. 262 tr. (text p. 257). Also *Epigraphica Indica*, Vol. 33:263.

42 The younger brother of the king of Mayurbhanj told me that the *devadasis* in Baripadā used a *supāri* (betel nut) as an intra-uterine device.

43 The amount one of the devadasis mentioned to me was in the range of 200 to 300 rupees. This according to her would be equivalent to 1,000 rupees today.

44 Professor Jawarhalal Mehta of the Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard University, quoted the following Sanskrit words to me in the context of a discussion we had about Sītā; '*Aśuryaṃpaśya rājadārā*,' meaning: 'The wife of a king is not to be seen even by the sun.' He could not recollect where the line came from and was not sure it was from Valmiki's Rāmāyaṇa.

45 In the record of rights (1955) the number of *māhārī*-s given is 30. Fifty is the number given to me by some of the devadasis.

46 Some devadasis say three generations ago, others four and still others seven. Their sense of time in general is extremely vague. They do not know offhand their age, but must consult the palm leaf on which their horoscope is cast to check it.

47 However, I have been told by a *sebāka* that when he accompanied his friend on a visit to a *māhārī's* house and his friend disappeared into the bedroom he would wait for him in the front room sipping *śarbet* (cold drink). The point of the story was to illustrate how he did not himself go into the bedroom. However, in his eagerness to make this point, he did not realize that he was contradicting a statement made at some other time about not accepting water from a *māhārī*.

48 sampradā nijoga ethi nāhī sampradāya
baiṣnaba aṭanti śūdra bolile dharmakhyaya
brāhmaṇa hoile dāsī paḍāre narahiba
khyatra baisya hoi gruhī dharma ācariba.
See n. 2, Chapter 3 on this manuscript.

49 The karaṇa caste is the great absorber for upwardly mobile groups. People who become educated and wealthy, by the third generation have married their daughters in karaṇa families and changed their name to Mohanty or Patnaik, the two most current karaṇa names.

50 The word *devadāsī* has attained widespread usage since the revival of Indian classical dance, first begun in Tamilnadu in the 1920s. It has become a pan-Indian word, whereas traditionally each region had its own term to designate temple dancers. Because of the status gained by classical dance as a fine art and the support of the government to institutions teaching dance, the word has acquired more prestige than its local equivalents. The previous administrator, in an effort to upgrade the declining prestige of these women, officially changed their title to *devadāsī*, a change most welcome by the women themselves. However, the government has not taken the place of the king in the patronage of these women, probably because of the nature of the relationship between these women and the king. The government supports and has created various conservatories in Orissa where dance is taught, but they have never given financial support to these women in spite of being petitioned by them. All the teachers of dance in Orissa today are men, with the exception of one or two women (non-devadasis) who have become stage performers of Oḍissi.

51 See Marriott and Inden, *Encyclopedia Britannica of the Social Sciences*, 1974, under 'caste'.

CHAPTER 3

SEXUALITY: PURITY, AUSPICIOUSNESS, AND STATUS

1 The ritual duties were shared equally among all the devadasis. Thus if there are, for example, 20 devadasis, each one will perform every 20 days. The day when it is her turn to do the ritual is called the *pāli*, meaning 'the share.'

2 This manuscript written on palm-leaf, is in the possession of pandit Sadasiva Ratha Sharma of Puri. I went regularly to Sri Sharma's house where he and I worked on the transliteration and translation of the manuscript. It is entitled *The Rules of the Dance of the Māhārī* (*māhārī nāca bidhi*). The pandit has two manuscripts of the same text. One has the following collophon: 'This book on the dance of the *māhārī* is copied by Bīrabara Sāhāni of the palace in Bāli Sāhi. This the 18th year of the

auspicious reign of the deity Bīrakiśorī. It was finished on the third day on the bright fortnight of Baiśākh (Apr.–May).'

(*e māhārī nāca pothi nakala kale bīrabara sāhāni bālinahara bīrakeśari debanka śubha 18 anka akhi trutīyāre lekha sampurṇa hoilā.*)

The other manuscript has the following collophon:
'This book was copied by Nārāyaṇa Sāmala of Cuḍanga Sāhi near Rāmamatha. This book belongs to māhārī Sajanī written in 1895 (calculated by Pandit Ratha Sharma).

(*epothi lekhanakāra nārāyaṇa sāmala sā cuṇḍanga sāhi rāmaji matha 1302 sāḷa e pothi sajanī māhārinkara.*)

The first manuscript was found by Panditji in Nikunja Matha of Puri. The 2nd manuscript was found in a village named Baku in the Puri district from the Siddha Baladev Temple.
The manuscripts date from the late 19th century. But it is not known when they were first written. This is the transliteration of the passages translated:

habiṣya bhojana śuddha patire śayana
biṣesare sebadine rahiba mauna
dāsīku sebā kālare jebānire khanti
mahānarake se punsa abaśya paḍanti. 82

je puruṣa sebā anga kadāti bānchhai
rājāgyāre guhāriṇā diantiti sehi
baḍa ṭhākura pākhare huanti aparādhi
emanta bacana śāstre achaiti sādhi. 83

rājā je gajapati āmbhakuḷa āśā
anna jaḷa kanji seje rakhicanti hansā
tāhanku debatā jāṇi bhāba anga deba
pāḷi dina niuchhāḷi heba nakariba. 88

3 For an exposition of the theory of pollution as boundary crossing see my article, 'Power, Purity and Pollution: 'The Caste System Reconsidered' in *Contributions to Indian Sociology* (n.s.), 1977. For a similar theory see also Veena Das, 'The Uses of Liminality: Society and Cosmos in Hinduism', *Contributions to Indian Sociology* (n.s.), Vol. 10, No. 2, 1976.

4 *Bāḷa* also means 'boy', 'newly born', 'ignorant'. *Bāḷa sūrjya* is the early morning sun. This early morning food offering is said to be given by Jagannātha's mother while his wife is away for the month visiting her parents. The term can also have the meaning of early morning offering.

5 The *satya yuga* is the first of four cycles of time, our present time belonging to the last of these periods and the most degenerate, the first one being the highest, purest time period. For a readable discussion of the *yuga*-s see Zimmer, *Myths and Symbols in Indian Art and Civilization*, esp. pp. 11–19.

6 A *samnyāsi* is a person who has renounced this world, cut all social ties, and devotes himself to his personal salvation. For an interesting discussion of the place of the *samnyāsi* in the Hindu scheme of things, see Louis Dumont, 'World Renunciation in Indian Religions' in L. Dumont, *Religion, Politics and History in India*, Mouton, 1970b.

7 This explanation is the one offered by A. L. Basham in *The Wonder That Was India*, where it is written that: 'In the larger shrines he [the god] is fanned by attendants and entertained by dancing girls like any ancient Indian king', p. 336.

8 For a good discussion of the revival of classical dance in Madras see Milton Singer, *When a Great Tradition Modernizes*, pp. 172–82. Singer unfortunately omits to mention the very important role played by Rukmini Devi Arundale, a brahmin woman who was the first high caste woman to study and perform the dance. She founded a school, Kala Kshetra, which has since become extremely famous. The courage which Rukmini Devi must have had to go against the attitudes prevalent at her time must have been sizable. In Puri today it is still a risky enterprise for a post-pubertal woman who is not a devadasi to dance in public. My research assistant, a Karaṇa by caste, performed in a Puri college function when she was an undergraduate and was greeted by rotten tomatoes. The only performances of dance I witnessed while in Puri were by little girls.

9 The following is a translation of Krishna's wedding song:

From here Krishna, taking the maiden, entered the palace of Dwarika
For the wedding of Gobinda, the clan of Jadu decorated the palace and did the wedding.
In all the houses of Dwarika there is the auspicious festival,
Many kinds of musical instruments are played, including the big drum which accompanies the five notes
All the women of Dwarika are excited because of Krishna's wedding
At the joyful festival there was dance and song.
There are the auspicious small and big flag and the full vessel
That vessel is covered with a cloth and a coconut.
The road was cleaned and decorated
Plaintain trees were fixed in the doorjambs.
Because of the auspicious ceremony scented incense was burned and lights lighted
In the path of bliss they have sprinkled sweet scented water.
The eyes of the people in the heavenly dwarika have become fruitful.
As in the wedding of Laxmī and Mādhaba the friends and relatives all together gave presents.
Together the women whose husbands are alive undid the knots at the end of the sari
And untied the knot of *kuśa* grass that had tied their hand.
The twiceborns are setting the fire and performing the fire sacrifice
According to their wishes and doing puja to it.
For the wedding there are 64 vedic *mantras*
On the wedding dais the *purohita* recited the verses.
On the great dais the couple is sitting,
The women play with the cowrie shells according to the rules.
The forest garland wearer (i.e. Krishna) played on the dais.
And again the daughter of Bhisma won the play.
From the great dais the couple was taken in the palace and there they ate five times.

Rāma's wedding song is as follows:

Hence forward this is the story of Rāma's wedding.

Hearing it people will be pure in that year.
In that city of Mithila they arranged the festival.
In the golden pot the small and big flag were tied.
Auspicious songs were sung and (the women) did *hulā-huli*.
The sound of many instruments was louder than the sea.
At the end of the night all the women are together
In the golden pots they prepare water mixed with sandal paste and camphor
It is the wedding festival of the god Managobinda
They wear a silk cloth named *naba tana pīta*
One maiden opened the joined hands
From that day on Śrī Rāma has this woman standing on the earth (i.e., Sītā).

10 The texts are Agni Purāṇa (140.30). These passages were, according to Bhattacharyya, inserted in the Agni Purāṇa from earlier texts: the Hayaśīrṣa Pañcharātra; the Varāhimihira's Bṛihat Saṃhitā of the middle of the 6th century.

11 The texts mentioned by Gonda are the Viṣṇusmṛti (63.29) and the Viṣṇudharmott. Purāṇa (II.163.20). For more references he refers the reader to J. J. Meyer, *Trilogie*, Vol. I, p. 8, Vol. II, p. 152ff.

12 This reference is given in S. N. Sinha and N. K. Basu, *History of Prostitution in Ancient India*, Vol. I, Calcutta, 1933, p. 159.
A. M. Penzer in *Poison Damsels* (London, 1952) reports the following about the south: 'A dasi is also deputed to walk at the head of Hindu marriage processions. Married women do not like to do this, as they are not proof against evil omens, which the procession may meet. And it is believed that dasis, to whom widowhood is unknown, possess the power of warding off the effects of inauspicious omens' (p. 165).

13 The correlation between water and sexual activity is documented by A. K. Coomaraswamy in *Yakṣas* (1971). The banner of Kāmadeva the god of love, is a *makara*, an imaginary aquatic animal. The *apsaras* are, according to this author, originally water nymphs. The original sense of the word is *apsu-rasa*, essence of the water (p. 41).

14 The phrase about the devadasi is as follows: *Amrapalli gote rohinī kuṇḍa sethi bahut loka muṇḍa bujāichanti*. 'Amrapalli is a Rohinī Kuṇḍa, there many people have dipped their head.'

15 The bright fortnight is that of the waxing moon; the dark fortnight is that of the waning moon.

16 The tale of Riṣyaśringa occurs in Book I, Chapter 9 of the Rāmāyaṇa and in the Mahābhārata in book 3, Chapter 33, 110–13. For several other versions of this myth see Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, *Asceticism and Eroticism in the Mythology of Śiva*, 1973, pp. 43–50.

17 This narrative is based on Van Buitenen's translation of the Mahābhārata, Vol. 2, pp. 432–41.

18 Famine is specifically mentioned in a Jātaka tale and a Chinese buddhist version of the myth. See O'Flaherty (1973:45).

19 The theme of the interrelation of entering the city and sexual union with a courtesan is vividly expressed in two Chinese versions where Riṣyaśringa enters the city carrying the courtesan on his shoulders. See O'Flaherty (1973:46).

20 Van Gennep in *Rites of Passage* (1972:34) understands sacred prostitution as a way to mediate incorporation into a religiously united group where the prostitutes are

explicitly reserved for strangers. Sexual intercourse being a literal 'incorporation'. It is thus an apt expression of any entrance: into a city, temple or new status. Such an interpretation would fit the Riṣyaśringa myth but could not be applied to the devadasis who are explicitly forbidden to strangers (or outsiders).

21 The five Śivas are jointly called the '*pañcupandaba*-s': the five Pandavas (the five brothers of the Mahābhārata). They are Lokanāth from the Lokanāth temple in the western edge of Puri; Jameśvara from the temple of the same name in the south-west part of Puri; Markandeya from the temple of the same name on the edge of the tank of the same name in the north-west part of Puri; Niḷākaṇṭha from the small temple of the same name in the eastern part of town and finally Kopālamocana from the Maṇikarṇikā temple on the south-west side of the main temple.

22 The dance of the devadasis and *gotipuas* on the boats has not been performed in the last ten years. Dance performed by males would seem to have existed at one time in Orissan temples judging by the representation of male dancers on some temples. It is possible that as in the case of the boys dancing on the Śiva boat, the male dancers performed only in Śiva temples. The most well known sculptural representation of male dancers in Orissa is found on the Kapileśwara temple (9th cent.) in Bhubaneswar and on the Paraśurāmeśvara temple (7th cent.) in the same city. A survey of temples to ascertain the veracity of this hypothesis would be interesting. In any case these dancers are not dressed as females, the way present-day male dancers are. A local historical explanation for this fact, also voiced by Sunil Kothari in 'Gotipua Dancers' (*Sangeet Natak*, Vol. 8, p. 32), is that under the influence of the neo-vaishnavite movement started by Chaitanaya in the 16th century, the worship of Krishna in the '*sakhī bhāva*' manner, i.e., with the feelings of a female friend of Rādhā's, called a *sakhī*, became popular, and dancing by boys dressed as women was started at that time. The *gotipua*-s dance up to the age of eighteen; they dance as young unmarried boys. Afterwards they become troupe leaders, actors or dance masters. For a discussion of Orissan architecture see Charles Fabri, *History of the Art of Orissa*, London, 1974; the frontispiece is a reproduction of the Kapileśwara male dancers.

23 The poem is written by Dinakruṣṇa Das, an Oriya poet of the latter part of the 17th century and is entitled '*snānoścbaba cautiśā*'. It is published as a small pamphlet.

24 Baḷabhadra is considered by some people to be Śiva. His wooden statue shows him with a snake hood over his head and his colour is white, a colour traditionally associated with Śiva. Among the nine side deities (*parśvadebatā*) on his chariot, one is of Ganeśa, two of Śiva. At the temple of Konarak there is a small panel representing a king worshipping three images, one having the shape of Jagannātha, the other being a representation of Durgā and the third being a Śiva lingam. For a discussion of this topic see G. C. Tripathi, A. Eschmann and H. Kulke, 'The Formation of the Jagannātha Triad' in *The Cult of Jagannātha and the Regional Tradition of Orissa*, Orissa Research Project, South Asia Interdisciplinary Research Programme (1978). In particular they mention that Balarāma (i.e. Baḷabhadra) is identified with Śiva in the Pañcarātra interpretation.

25 It might be objected that it is the three deities that are naked and not only Baḷabhadra. In this temple the three wooden images of Jagannātha, Baḷabhadra and Subhadrā are always treated in the same manner. The offerings are done simultaneously and identically by three priests. It is only in the treatment of the representative images that differentiation enters. In the case of the wooden images,

whatever is done to the one is done to the others; this applies to actual 'bodily' manipulations such as decorating, dressing, bathing, feeding, etc.

26 For an excellent discussion of the contrast between the city and the forest in the Indian context, see Van Buitenen's introduction to the book of the forest in his translation of the Mahābhārata, Vol. 2.

27 These quotes are from stanza 11 and stanza 19 of the poem.

28 The *maithuna* sculptures on temples in Puri, Konarak and Bhubaneswar sometimes represent the union of a woman and an ascetic. Some texts also speak of the representation on temples of *tapasvilīlā* or *tapakriḍā*, the amorous sport of ascetics. See Gonda, 'Ascetics and Courtesans' reprinted in *Selected Studies*, Vol. IV, *History of Ancient Indian Religion*, Leiden, 1975, p. 243. Bhattacharyya also mentions another text with a similar reference (1963:231–2).

29 Lakṣmī is addressed as '*mā*'. The devadasi can be thus addressed since she is the representative of Lakṣmī. It must be noted that the category of *ahya* and the category 'mother' can overlap. An *ahya* can be a mother. The category 'mother' however does not discriminate between the status of *ahya* and that of widow (*bidabhā*).

30 *Samsāra* in sanskrit texts refers to the wheel of rebirth. In colloquial usage in Puri it is used, especially by women, to refer to having children or sometimes more generally to having a family.

31 Lakṣmī is associated with water; in several of the songs that the devadasis sing she is called 'daughter of the ocean' since her father Varuṇa is master of the ocean. For a discussion of the association between Lakṣmī and water, see Zimmer's discussion of the lotus symbolism in *Myths and Symbols*, pp. 90–102. Another name of Lakṣmī is Kamalā, the lotus.

Lakṣmī is also the goddess of food who at the time of harvest in December is worshipped in the villages; she resides in the full granaries which on this occasion are decorated with drawings made with white rice powder in which the motif of a tied bunch of cut rice (*dhāna*) is predominant. Thus, Lakṣmī's association with water and food is paralleled in her representatives' association with the same things.

CHAPTER 4

THE KING: DIVINITY AND STATUS

1 The royal insignia are: the elephant; the horse; the fly-whisk (*cāmara*); the black and white umbrella (*chattrā*); the large fan (*tarāsa*); drumming in the telengana (from Andhra) style; the *kāhāliā*, a trumpet-like instrument; the devadasis.

2 For much of the historical information contained in this chapter I have relied on Hermann Kulke's work published in *The Cult of Jagannath and the Regional Tradition of Orissa*, edited by E. Eschmann, H. Kulke and G. C. Tripathi, Delhi, 1978. In this work Kulke has four essays. I have also used a manuscript that Professor Kulke gave me in January 1979, entitled 'The Jagannath cult and Gajapati Kingship: A Contribution to the History of the Religious Legitimation of Hindu Rulers' (Kulke 1978).

3 The inscription is published in *South Indian Inscriptions*, Vol. IV, No. 1329.

Rudra is Śiva and was the state deity of the previous Somavaṃśi dynasty with its temple in Bhubaneśvara. Durgā was the state deity of the dynasty prior to the Somavaṃśi, that of the Bhaumakaras, with its temple in Jaipur. According to the findings of the Orissa project, there is no evidence prior to the reign of Anaṅgabhīma for the existence of a triad in the temple of Jagannātha at Puri. All previous epigraphical, textual and archaeological evidence only make reference to one deity: Puruṣottama and sometimes to his consort Lakṣmī. By calling himself the son of these three deities, Anaṅgabhīma III thus claimed the inheritance of the two previous dynasties of Orissa. According to Kulke: 'this first *historical* triad of Orissan deities, which became a predecessor of the Puri Triad [Jagannātha, Baḷabhadra and Subhadrā], had thus a strong ideological basis in its clear function for the legitimation of Anaṅgabhīma's power over Central Orissa, the domain of these three deities' (Kulke 1978a:151).

4 'On 20.3.1230, his [Anaṅgabhīma] wife made valuable donations to the god Viṣṇu-Allālanātha in one of the Cōḷa capitals, Kāñchīpuram (Fn. *Epigrapgica Indica*, XXXI, 1955, p. 96). In this inscription it is explicitly mentioned that the donation was made 'by the order (*ādeśāt*) of Lord Puruṣottama and during the victorious rule of Anaṅgabhīma who is the deputy of Viṣṇu and a son of Puruṣottama' (Kulke, ibid.: 152).

5 A photograph of this sculpture is reproduced in *The Cult of Jagannath* (Fig. 51). I find it hard to agree with Kulke's opinion on this subject, namely that 'it would be wrong to derive from this iconographical evidence a personal deification of king Narasiṃha' (1978a:203). To me this iconographical evidence fits with other epigraphical and textual evidence regarding the divine status of the king.

6 Kulke (ibid.:207) and Dash (ibid.:218) discuss whether this ritual reflected a strengthening of the position of the king *vis-à-vis* the priests of the temple or vice versa and come to opposite conclusions. Contrast their approach to this ritual and my own interpretation in Chapter 9.

7 Whether the king himself wrote the treatise or not is of no great importance. What is relevant is that the attribution of authorship to him indicates that everyone thought the king to be the final arbiter in matters of ritual procedure in the temple. Dash's discussion (ibid.:218–9) of the meaning of the king writing this manual is all in terms of a power play between the priests of Jagannātha and the king. I do not wish to indicate that such power plays may not have existed but rather that they took place within a framework of certain rules of the game which only a structural analysis can reveal. Without such an analysis one is reduced to ad hoc hypotheses as to what happened.

8 Kane cites Manu (VII, 4–5): 'The Creator created the king with the essential parts taken from Indra, the Wind god, Yama, the Sun, Agni, Varuna, the Moon and Kubera the lord of wealth and therefore he surpasses all beings by his majesty.' The Matsyapurāṇa (226.1) states that the king was created by Brahma by taking portions of gods. The Agnipurāṇa (226.17–20) says that the king exercises the functions of nine deities: the Sun, the Moon, Vāyu, Yama, Varuna, Fire, Kubera, the Earth, and Viṣṇu and that he has the form of these. The Mārkaṇḍeyapurāṇa (27.21–6) mentions five deities. The Vāyupurāṇa (57.72) remarks that all past and future *cakravartins* are born on the earth with parts of Viṣṇu. The Matsyapurāṇa (226.1–12) states both that the king is created from parts of the gods and that he exercises the function of certain gods. The Bhāgavata-purāṇa (IV.14.26–7) states

that six deities—Viṣṇu, Brahma, Śiva, Indra, Varuna, Vāyu—exist in the body of the king and that he is full of the parts of all the gods.

9 I have also used a document written by Trinayana for the Orissa Research Project. I am deeply grateful to Professor Kulke for having allowed me to photocopy this document.

10 According to the 1960–1 census there was a total of 1,793 persons carrying out some rituals in the temple, representing an increase of 446 persons over the record of rights. It is not clear whether this increase represents an increase in population or reflects a different census method. Information is from Hein (1978:441).

11 I gathered two different lists of musicians; one from the two *rājagurus* and the other from a *paṇḍā* informant. List no. 1: *Mahuriā*, pipe player, *ghasa*, player of a type of drum; *dholaki*, player of a big drum; *Svara*, pipe player, *gini*, player of small cymbals, *kāhāliā*, player of the long trumpet. List no. 2: *samkhua*, blower of the conchshell, belong to the devadasi group; *ghantuā*, player of the big cymbals, of the bell-metal caste (*kansāri*), same as above; *mardeli*, drummer of the devadasi group, accompanies their dancing; *kāhāliā*, same as above, *upāngiā* player of a drum; *jhānjuā*, player of big cymbals.

12 The following list of palace servants is the one reconstituted from memory by the two Puri Rājagurus.

1. The *Khurdā Nijoga*. The term *nijoga*, applied both to the temple and the palace refers to a group of related ritual services. The temple rituals are traditionally categorized into 36 *nijogas*. Although in the record of rights 118 separately named ritual duties are listed, many of these are carried out by members of the same *nijoga*; it is also the case that several groups of ritual types of duties are categorized as belonging to one *nijoga*. In this case the Khurdā Nijoga refers to a group of women who are the palace female servants and correspond to the devadasis in the temple. These women are also called *deis*. Their duties—like that of the devadasis—are to sing and to dance at the time of festivals and at the life-cycle ceremonies of the king. (See Chapter 5 for details on their rituals.) They are called Khurdā Nijoga because as one of them told me and as the devadasis also told me 'they were brought from Khurdā'. They do not remember when this happened and speak of it as if it was recent history. I take it that when the Rājās of Khurdā finally lost all their territory at the time of the British conquest and permanently moved to Puri in the early 19th century—when the new palace was built—they brought along with them these women.

2. The *chatāra nijoga*. The word *chatāra* comes from *chatā* meaning 'umbrella', not the black western variety but with a flat top and decorated with hangings. The Rājā of Puri has the right to have displayed a white and a black umbrella when he goes out in procession, when he holds court and at certain festivals. Also included in this group is the man who carries a large fan (*tarāsa*). These symbols of kingship are also displayed in front of Jagannātha, but the ritual specialists in charge of these in the temple are brahmins whereas in the palace they are śūdras, of the caste of cultivators (*casā*).

3. *Paḍhiāri*. This term is the same as that used for the corresponding service in the temple, which consists of watching the doors of the palace. The *muda karaṇa* mentioned above who is in charge of the gate to the queen's apartments, appoints a *paḍhiāri* who does the actual watching. The *paḍhiāris* in the temple—like the *chatāra* in the temple—are brahmins whereas those in the palace are śūdras.

4. *Bārika* (barbers). This is the name of the caste of barbers, but in the palace the barbers are called by a different term: *māphist*. They shave and cut the king's hair.

5. *Dhobā* (washerman). This is also the name of the caste. The king's washermen are called *dahimāchuā*.

6. *Hāḍi* (sweeper). Untouchable caste. The palace sweepers are called *mehantara*.

7. *Kaṇḍarā* (untouchable). The night watchmen at the palace.

8. *Jagaddeba* (not a caste name). Persons who help the king walk; śūdras.

9. *Pāttaśaṇī* (not the name of a caste). Caste not known but śūdras. Their duties consisted in preparing the bed of the king; working as messengers; waving the fly-whisk (*cāmara*) when the king sits on the throne.

13 Besides this daily ritual the *rājagurus* or members of their family will also do the offering at the time of the festival of goddess Bimalā in the temple and of goddess Kanaka Durgā in the palace which both take place during Durgā Pūjā in the month of *āświna* (Sept.–Oct.). Since normally these brahmins do not officiate in temples their participation in that capacity in those festivals is remarkable.

14 Here I must mention that Nityananda Patnaik's description of the same events are not clear and give the impression that it is the king who is worshipped. This is what he writes:

> After morning ablutions (*abakash*) of Lord Jagannatha are over at the temple the tooth stick which is used to brush the teeth of Lord Jagannatha, a little of water in which the Lord is bathed and the coconuts which are offered to the Lord at the time of the Lord's slumber at night are carried by special temple *Sebaks* to the palace. The Raja's morning ablutions are performed with the Lord's tooth stick, water, etc. in exactly the same manner as in the case of the Lord. The Raja sits on a wooden seat in the room where the *Debarchan* is performed, Rajaguru (the priest of the palace) performing the rituals. In fact, the Raja's teeth are brushed in the same mock manner as in the case of Lord Jagannatha. (N. Patnaik, *Cultural Tradition in Puri*, 1977:32–3).

The king's morning ablutions could hardly be done in exactly the same manner as the morning bath (*abakāśa*) of the deities since that is done by pouring water over three metal mirrors placed in a plate, in which the reflection of the deities are mirrored. According to Trinayana, the king himself brushes his teeth and not in a mock fashion. But that is less crucial than the lack of clarity in Patnaik's account as to what the *devārcana* is. From his account it could be inferred that it is the rājā who is worshipped by the *rājaguru*.

15 Kane discusses at length the different jurisdictions of the assembly of learned brahmins and the royal court (see Vol. 4: 68–77). In particular he points out that 'many of the sins (though not all) for which penances are provided in the smṛtis are also offences punishable by the king or state. For example, murder, theft, incest, perjury are acts punishable by the state in almost all countries even now and were so in ancient and medieval India. Persons guilty of these were also liable to undergo prāyaścitta' (Vol. 4:68). What is very interesting is that offences of the *lèse-majesté* variety were not under the jurisdiction of the assembly of learned brahmins. This is what Kane writes: '. . . . Obstructing the road, prying when the king is taking his meals, sitting before the king on one's haunches, speaking loudly before the king are among the fifty *chalas* of which the king could take cognizance *suo motu* and

award suitable punishment. But there is nothing to show that such actions ever fell within the purview of the rules about prāyaścitta' (ibid.:69).

16 Mādaḷā Pāñjī: according to the Orissa Research Project, this text was compiled around 1600 AD (Kulke:141). The project collected three unpublished manuscripts. The Govinda Matha Mādaḷā Pāñjī, a version of the M.P. available in the form of a paper transcript with the former Mahanta of the Govinda Matha of Bhubaneswar. The Rājābhoga Itihāsa, a part of the M.P. of the Deuḷa Karaṇa of Puri (Orissa Research MS 1). The Jagannātha Sthala Vṛttāntamu, a telugu version of the M.P. translated for the Orissa Research Project by S. N. Rajaguru (ORS MS 441). There is a published version of the M.P. edited by A. B. Mohanty, Prachi Samiti, Cuttack 1940, reprinted by Utkal University, Bhubaneswar 1969.

17 On the varṇa status of kings, see also Veena Das' study of the Caste Purāṇas of Gujarat in *Structure and Cognition: Aspects of Hindu Caste and Ritual*, 1977, Chapters 2 and 3 in which she also argues that the king is a separate category.

CHAPTER 5

PALACE RITUALS

1 The girls' puberty ceremony is not discussed here (see Chapter 3) since the kings of Puri did not keep their daughters but gave them to be adopted by feudatory kingly families. This is necessitated by the fact that a king cannot become a brother-in-law to anyone else. The term brother-in-law (*salā*) is also a term of extreme abuse. The brother-in-law is inferior to his sister's husband.

2 The *rājagurus* and several other persons—the devadasis and some *paṇḍās*—were disappointed that the king had not married the princess of Nepal. Everyone according to them had hoped for such a match since that would have meant wealth and power and the hope that the king might regain his former position in temple affairs. I have of course no way of assessing how widely distributed such an opinion is, but from my sample it seems that among traditional persons in Puri it seems to be generally held. It does indicate that the Gajapati ideology is far from being dead.

3 Kane mentions that in the texts the use of salt is prohibited during *śrāddha* (Vol. 4:416). Also at the feast for brahmins after funeral ceremonies, salt should not be used (Vol. 4:466). It would appear that salt, like turmeric, is associated with auspiciousness, via weddings and kingship, hence its prohibition during death ceremonies. See Chapter 4 on the significance of salt at weddings.

4 Normally the father of the groom sits on the platform. Since the king's father is dead, his uncle officiated. It must be recalled that generally the head of the household (*karttā*) is the one who will sit by the couple, provided he is not a widower.

5 In non-royal weddings, the bride's side would have its own officiating priest.

6 Such grinding stones are found under trees and are worshipped for the fulfillment of all desires.

7 Inden and Nicholas write that in Bengal the husband makes his wife recite at that moment the following *mantra*: 'You are eternally fixed (*dhruva*); may I become eternally fixed in the *kuḷa* of my husband.' (1977:48).

8 The ancestor worship performed at the wedding ceremony is the first, since an unmarried man cannot do this. He can only perform an ancestor offering on the occasion of the first anniversary of a relative's death. In the case of brahmins, the *piṇḍa* offering to the ancestors is cooked.

9 In Bengal the wedding night—i.e. the night that the wedding is consummated—is called 'the auspicious night' (*śubha-rātri*). See ibid.:51.

10 Veena Das (1977b:101) also writes that ancestors are associated with progeny.

11 In their review of Srinivas' book on the Coorgs, Dumont and Pocock equate auspiciousness with purity; Dumont and Pocock 'Pure and Impure' in *Contributions to Indian Sociology* 1959:32–3. For a fuller discussion of this point see my introduction in *Purity and Auspiciousness*, edited by Carman and Marglin, Brill, 1983.

12 *Gādi* means 'throne' and *gādināsina* means 'sitting on the throne'; *abhiṣeka* is 'coronation'; literally it means 'sprinkling'.

13 S. N. Rajaguru referred me to his article 'Kenduli Inscriptions of Nrusingha Dev' in *Orissa Historical Research Journal*, Vol. 5, part 1; pp. 1–100. The marriage date is given as 1077 AD.

14 In the papers by Inden and Das the earths are as follows: 1. mountain top; 2. anthill; 3. Viṣṇu/Śiva temple; 4. Indra/Candra temple; 5. royal palace; 6. earth dug up by elephant's tusk; 7. earth dug up by bulls; 8. tank; 9. confluence of two rivers; 10. two banks of a river; 11. courtesan's doorway; 12. elephant's stall; 13. cattle pen; 14. horse stable; 15. earth dug up by chariot's wheel. Numbers 1, 6, 10, 11, and 13 are the same as in the list I give.

15 In this article by Gonda: 'Ancient Indian Kingship from the religious point of view' the evidence from a wealth of texts attests to the role of the king as the increaser of the realm, the bringer of fertility, health, well-being, and prosperity.

16 The ten directions are (in Oriya): north (*uttara*); south (*dakhina*); east (*pūrba*); west (*paścima*); south-east (*agni*); north-east (*īśāna*); north-west (*bāyu*); south-west (*nairuda*); up (*urddva*); down (*adhaḥ*).

17 The elephant's goad is one of the weapons with which Durgā is represented when killing the buffalo demon.

CHAPTER 6

ROYAL TEMPLE RITUAL

1 For a detailed description of the ritual day in the temple see appendix 1, also Tripathi (1978:285–308).

2 A detailed list of tasks performed by both brahmin and non-brahmin temple servants is given in note 1 of Chapter 2.

3 The word '*dhūpa*' actually means 'incense' but it is the word commonly used to refer to the *pūjā* where 5 or 16 articles, both including food, are offered. G. C. Tripathi suggests that maybe this usage arose from the observation by the common people that when the doors of the sanctum are opened after the offering is over the sanctum is full of smoke from the incense.

4 This platform is called *beharaṇa*. See diagram of the temple compound.

5 This is what Robert Lingat writes about the function of the Hindu king as maintainer of the social order: 'Kingship is regarded as an institution necessary to

the maintenance of the social order established by the Creator for the good of creatures. Only in the Golden Age could men dispense with a king, because all of them had full knowledge of their duties and conformed to them naturally . . . . Consequent on the degeneration of humanity through the Ages, men lost the inborn sense of their duties. Society was handed over to disorder. The strong oppressed the weak . . . . Here we meet one of the dogmas of Indian thought: A society without a king (*a-rājaka*) is not viable. It is "the logic of the fish" (i.e. the law of the jungle) which is law.' (In *The Classical Law of India*, 1973, p. 207).

6 *Māṇabasā* is another name for Lakṣmī *pūjā* done on the Thursdays of the month of Mārgaśīra. The meaning comes from a central element in that *pūjā*, the *māṇa* which is a basket made of woven cane of a certain measure of rice (about half a kilogram). For the *pūjā* a new *māṇa* should be used and it is painted white with rice powder. This *māṇa* is considered to be Lakṣmī and it is seated (*basā*) for the worship; the 'seating' of Lakṣmī is done in the following way: freshly harvested rice is poured on the floor of the worship room; on top of that mound a new small wooden seat (*piḍḍhā*) [such a small wooden stand is used by women when they cook in the kitchen] is placed; on top of that the paddy stalks are placed and on top of that the new *māṇa* is placed and filled with freshly harvested rice on which two betel nuts are then placed. This pile of rice and the seat and the full basket is what is worshipped.

7 *namaste namaste māgo harira gharaṇī/ muhi chāra hīnajāti na jānai puni/ caṇḍāḷa sāhire ghara puṇi caṇḍāḷunī/ kincite bhakati mora ghena kamāḷinī/*

8 This account is based on the text of Balaram Dasa, procured and translated for me by P. C. Mishra. The story told to me by the *pūjāri* of the Lakṣmī-Nrusingha temple was a shortened and simplified version of the text.

9 The following untouchable castes were not allowed in the temple: *dhobā* (washerman); *hāḍi* (sweeper); *bāuri* (landless labourers); *pāna* (?); *doma* (basket weavers); *camāra* or *moci* (leather workers); *kandāra* (landless labourers). Today those castes still live outside of the traditional boundaries of the city and use their own separate wells. In the tanks of the city they bathe in a separate corner which only they can use. The *dhobās* are not allowed to wash their clothes in the tanks of the city. The untouchables bathing in a corner of the tank is a new development, a compromise with modern laws; traditionally they were not allowed to bathe in them. The untouchables won the right to enter Jagannātha's temple only several years after independence when one of them had become, through the political process, a state minister and led a group of untouchables to the temple. The *paṇḍās*, it is alleged, received them with a hail of stones thrown from the top of the walls surrounding the temple compound.

CHAPTER 7

TIME TRANSCENDED

1 It is widely believed that at that time the devadasis sing only from the *Gīta Govinda* (see D. N. Patnaik 1971:54). However Brundabati assured me that this was not the case. She sings Oriya songs as well as verses from the *Gīta Govinda*. The belief that only the *Gīta Govinda* is sung probably arises from an inscription in the temple

which forbids all other songs to be sung. I was not able to ascertain whether the singing of Oriya songs was a recent innovation or not.

In the dance hall, on the western wall there is an inscription in the stone wall, which has been dated AD July 1499 and was done by King Pratāparudra Deva. The translation of it is as follows:

> Dancing will be performed at the bhoga time of the elder Thakur (i.e. Balarama) and Geeta Govinda Thakura (i.e. Jagannatha). This dancing will be held from the end of evening Dhupa up to the time of Bada Singar (bed time) Dhupa. The batch (dancing girls) of Bada Thakura, the fixed female dancers of Kapileswar Thakura, the old batch, the Telengi batch, all will learn no other song than Geeta Govinda of Bada Thakura. They will not sing any other song. No other kind of dancing should be performed before God. Besides the dancing there are four Vaishnava singers, they will sing only Geeta Govinda. Hearing in one tone from them, those who are ignorant will learn the Geeta Govinda song, they should not learn any other song. That superintendent who knowingly allows other songs to be sung and other dancing to be performed rebels against Jagannath (In J.B.R.S. 1893:91, 92, quoted in D. N. Patnaik 1977:34–5).

Caitanya's arrival in Puri is dated at 1510 (see S. K. De 1961:89), thus this inscription would be dated before his arrival. Pratāparudra Deva ruled at Cuttack from 1497 to 1540 and is reputed to have been much influenced by Caitanya. In a footnote (p. 90) De writes the following about this king: 'His [Pratāparudra Deva] *Sarasvatī-vilāsa* has in the beginning an invocation of Śiva, although in some manuscripts there is also an invocation of Viṣṇu Hayagrīva. This work is an authoritative compilation of orthodox Smṛti, and has nothing to do with the special Vaiṣṇava Ācārya [Caitanya].' De goes on to minimize the alleged great influence of Caitanya on Pratāparudra Deva. The inscription, although it is dated before Caitanya's arrival in Puri, shows that Pratāparudra Deva is trying to impose the *Gīta Govinda* and has in mind the opposition of the superintendent, the *paricā*, who according to the present day *paricā*, have been *śāktas* at least as far back as that period.

In a fascinating article on the Oriya Mahābhārata by J. V. Boulton of the School of Oriental and African Studies ('Sarala Dasa: His Audience, His Critics and His Mahabharata' in *Image*, Balasore, Orissa, January 1976) points out that its author, Sarala Dasa (16th century) was a *śākta*, and in his Mahābhārata, ridicules and satirizes the amorous Krishna of the *Gīta Govinda*. Boulton's research led him to question the accepted view that all new Vaisnavite influence came to Orissa from the north with Caitanya. He contends that recent evidence tends on the contrary to suggest that some of these new influences may have come to Orissa from the South with the Eastern Gangas when they expanded their Kalinga empire northwards into the Oriya-speaking lands. The Gangas were deposed in the 15th century by the Oriya Surya Vaṃśa (Sun Dynasty) and according to Boulton, they were like their predecessors, spreaders of the Gopinātha cult, a cult in which Gopinātha is the Krishna of the *Gīta Govinda*. The second of the Suryas, Puruṣottama Deva, married a princess from Kañchīpuram, an episode extremely popular in local legends. The telengi batch of our inscription is said in Puri to have been introduced since Puruṣottama Deva because of his wife. According to Boulton, Caitanya was probably welcomed by Pratāparudra, not because—as Boulton says—he brought a new faith from Bengal, but because he accepted the one that he himself was seeking

against strong oppositon. Thus the date of the inscription, 1499, previous to Caitanya's arrival in Puri, could be understood.

2 The *damaru* is a small drum shaped like two cones attached at their apex in the middle of the drum. A string with a small ball attached to it is fastened to the drum and when the drum is shaken from side to side the ball hits alternatively each drum-head producing a rapid staccato drumming. It is Śiva's characteristic drum.

3 Jagannātha Dāsa is considered to be one of the 'five friends' (*pañca sākhas*) of Caitanya, the Oriya followers of the Bengali figure. On Jagannātha Dāsa see Prabhat Mukherjee, *The History of Medieval Vaishnavism in Orissa*, Calcutta, 1940, pp. 77–82. There Mukherjee writes that Jagannātha Dāsa's translation of the Bhāgavata was severely censured by the Bengali Vaishnavites. One of the great differences between the Bengali disciples and this Oriya version is that Rādhā is not mentioned in the latter. Jagannātha Dāsa names another *gopī*: Brundābati, but she does not correspond to Rādhā and is said to have practiced asceticism to gain Krishna's favour, something the Rādhā of the *Gīta Govinda* is very unlikely to do. She is also identified with goddess Tulāsi, the plant sacred to Viṣṇu. In not mentioning Rādhā, the Oriya Bhāgavata follows the Sanskrit Bhāgavata Purāṇa of the 9th century AD.

4 For examples in the *dharmaśāstra* literature and in the epic literature for the terrible consequences of *pratiloma* actions see my paper 'Power, Purity and Pollution'.

5 In Jagannātha Dāsa *Śrīmad Bhāgabata*, 1954, Samnyasi Press, Berhampur, 10th part, 34th canto, p. 172. I am grateful to Purna Chandra Mishra for having brought this to my attention.

6 For a similar point see Steve Kemper, 'Time, Person and Gender in Sinhalese Astrology and Sinhalese Life', p. 7; paper presented at the November 1978 AAA meeetings, L.A. at the session entitled 'South Asian Calendrical Systems.' Kemper points out that from the perspective of time, people, regardless of status and gender, are undifferentiated except that women are more involved in time than men. He concludes from that that: 'A woman is more open to astrological influences as they occur in the passing of time, less stable, and less auspicious' (p. 7). I would disagree with him on this latter point as everything I am writing points to an opposite conclusion.

7 The days of the week are:

Somabāra	Monday	Moon
mangaḷabāra	Tuesday	Mars
budhubāra	Wednesday	Mercury
gurubāra	Thursday	Jupiter (Bruhaspati, the guru of the gods)
śukrabāra	Friday	Venus
śanibāra	Saturday	Saturn
rabibāra	Sunday	Sun

Two additional ones are *rāhu* and *ketu*.

8 See Charles Fabri, *History of the Art of Orissa*, pp. 39, 119 and 176.

9 In the south, courtesans or prostitutes are called *nitya-sumaṅgalī*: the always auspicious one. See Anantha Murthy's *Samskara* translator's note, p. 148.

10 Yaśodā is not Krishna's natural mother. Krishna was in the womb of Devakī, and his natural father was king Vasudeva. For the myths surrounding Krishna's birth and transfer to Brundāban see, for example, the richly illustrated book by Walter

Spink, *Krishnamandala*, University of Michigan, 1971, pp. 1–9. Nanda and Yaśodā are not Krishna's natural parents; Krishna's doings in Brundāban, his life and stay there, do not have their origins in the seed (*bīrjya*) and the womb (*jatha*). The former belong to the realm of hierarchy, to which Krishna's realm in Brundāban does not belong, and the latter has, as we will see in the next chapter, dark connotations absent from the totally self-abandoned love represented by milk, curd, and butter.

11 In the original story—the Bhāgavata Purāṇa—Krishna sucks Putanā's breasts dry thereby sucking the life out of her. That action is even closer to Śiva's action of drinking the poison.

12 This version is based not on the oral version which I heard at the Lakṣmī-Nrusingha palace but on a text: Balarāma Dās' *Lakṣmī Purāṇa*, an Oriya text of the 16th century. I am indebted to P. C. Mishra for the translation.
The myth is also found in the following Sanskrit texts: Rāmāyaṇa (Bāla Kāṇḍa 45, 14–31), in the Mahābhārata, in the Viṣṇu Purāṇa, the Bhāgavata, the Matsya Purāṇa. For a discussion of these sources, see Bruce Long, 'Life out of Death: A Structural Analysis of the Myth of the "Churning of the Ocean of Milk" ' in *Hinduism: New Essays in the History of Religions*, edited by Bardwell Smith, Brill, 1976. The Oriya text, *Mahālakṣmī Purāṇa*, is published by Srī Kailāśa Candra Beherā, Dharma Grantha Press, Cuttack (year not given).

13 In making this point Long refers the reader to an essay by F. Edgerton, 'The Fountain of Youth', JAOS, Vol. XXVI, No. 1, 1905.

14 This myth is found in the following texts: Rāmāyaṇa I. 38–44; Mahābhārata Vanaparvan 108–109; Bhāgavata Purāṇa IX.9. In her paper, 'Gangā: Myth and Symbol in Hindu Sacred Geography' (paper presented at the regional Northeast conference of the American Association of Religion held at Harvard Divinity School, March 1978), Diana Eck mentions several texts where Gangā is considered, or equated with the consort of Śiva. Gangā, as the daughter of Himavat, is the sister of Parvatī.

CHAPTER 8

TIME DISSOLVED

1 These are (1) a preparation of rice with certain spices called 'sheep's head' standing for meat; (2) a preparation of green leafy vegetables with ginger standing for fish; (3) green coconut water in a bell-metal jar standing for wine. According to Trinayana these offerings are the first to be brought to the inner sanctum; they are carried by a priest called the 'great cook' (*mahāsuāra*), who is the head of the temple cooks. Trinayana considers this to be evidence for the fact that the *śākta* tradition is the most ancient one in the temple.

In the śākta tradition Jagannātha is not taken to be Viṣṇu but Kāḷī; Subhadrā is Bhubaneśwarī; Subhadrā is in fact invoked daily with the *mantra* of Bhubaneśwarī (see Tripathi, 1978:288). Baḷabhadra is considered to be goddess Tārā. In Trinayana's words: 'In the temple, the works of Kāḷī are done secretly (*pracchanna*).' One of the reasons he gave me for the secrecy is that in the worship of Kāḷī there are many things done which would normally pollute the worship.

2 P. C. Mishra, in collaboration with Trinayana (who does not know English), translated the SPB. The original palm-leaf manuscript is in Trinayana's possession. P. C. Mishra worked with a copy on 50 paper pages.

3 I wish to express my deep gratitude to Professor John Carman, director of the Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard University, for giving me a grant to have this manuscript transliterated and translated. Without this help, I could not have had access to this manuscript.

The manuscript is on palm-leaf and has 73 leaves inscribed on both sides. A photocopy of the palm leaves along with the transliteration in devanagari and the English translation are at the Harvard Divinity School library. The original is in Paralakhemundi.

4 In a paper reporting on a *cakra pūjā* ritual carried out in two Tantric centers David Knipe (1978) writes that the rituals are performed in rooms which are beneath the main sanctuaries. One of the centers is at Mizrapur city, 40 miles west of Benares and the other at Benares. In these two localities there are actually two underground chambers, one below the other. See D. Knipe 'Cakra Pūjā at 2 Tantric Centres' paper presented at the IXth annual workshop of the *Conference on Religion in South India*, Chambersburg, Penn., May 1978. It is also rumored in Puri that there is a secret underground chamber located beneath the inner sanctum of the main temple.

5 Only about one third of the *mantras* were translated in this manuscript since Trinayana did not feel he could divulge all knowledge of this ritual. All the instructions as to the ritual actions were translated as well as commented upon.

6 This *mantra* is as follows in the SPV text: *Om biṣṇuryonim kalpayatu tvaṣṭārūpāṇi sincatu āsincatu prajāpatirddhātagarbham dadhātu te garbhamdehi sinībālī garbhamdehi sarasvati garbhante aswinou debā bādhattām puṣkarastajou*.

7 I am well aware that the term *Kuḷa* in the context of this left-hand tantric ritual is given other meanings by members of the Śākta tradition. I am not arguing that the fact that *kuḷa* is also a kinship term makes it *the* only meaning of that term. It is *a* meaning which I happen to think is significant in the context of my concerns.

8 I asked Trinayana to explain the reference in the text to the sin of brahminicide done by killing Kaca and he told me the following myth: 'Kaca is the son of Bruhaspati, the guru of the gods. He came down to earth to be the disciple of Śukra, the guru of the demons because Śukra had in his possession a *mantra* which enabled the demons to bring their dead back to life, which of course gave them a decided advantage over the gods. Kaca thus came to live with Śukra. The latter had a beautiful daughter called Devayānī and she fell in love with Kaca. When the demons came to learn that Kaca was a god and that he was keeping a lot of company with their guru's daughter, they decided to kill him. Without Śukra's knowledge, they drank wine (*madya*) and killed Kaca. But at the request of Devayānī, her father Śukra brought Kaca back to life with his *mantra*. The demons again killed him and in this way everything was repeated several times over. Śukra never knew that it was the demons who were killing Kaca; he thought it was the wine's responsibility. He thought the wine made the demons mad and then they killed Kaca. So Śukra cursed (*śāpa*) the wine, thinking it was responsible for the death of Kaca.

9 Dumont and Pocock in 'Pure and Impure' (*Contributions to Indian Sociology* 1959:19–21) try to explain this seeming contradiction by a lengthy argument about

the relativity of purity and impurity. The argument is not convincing to me and I think that the difficulty vanishes once one sees the connection between menstrual blood and auspiciousness.

10 See Śatapata Brāhmaṇa according to the text of the Mādhyandina school; translated by Julius Eggling, Part V, *Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. 49, 1972 (1900). When Urvaśi cries: 'Alas, they are taking away my darlings' the Sanskrit word which is translated by 'darling' is the word for 'son' (*putra*). I wish to thank my friend Edward Hale of the Center for the Study of World Religions for reading the Sanskrit version of this passage for me and giving me the above information.

11 Judith Blank did two years of fieldwork in Baripadā, Mayurbhanj from 1970 to 1972. She did research on the Chau dance and submitted her Ph.D. thesis to the Anthropology Department of Chicago University. I wish to thank her for lending me her field-notes on the *raja* festival.

12 Bharadvāja Paitṛmedhika Sūtra, critically edited and translated by C. G. Kashikar, Poona, 1964, pp. 467.

13 The root *veśa* is the same as in that for the word *veśyā* meaning prostitute, courtesan. Again I am indebted to Edward Hale for help with the Sanskrit.

14 See also the reproduction of a drawing of a goddess, naked except for a loin cloth, with fifteen outstretched arms pointing to the names of courts where the members of the family of painter have been employed in an article by B. N. Goswamy entitled 'Pahari Painting: The Family as the Basis of Style', *Marg*, 1968, Vol. XXI, No. 4, pp. 17–62. The author argues that the goddess represented in this drawing is 'the personal deity of a member of the family, and that the names of the states and persons which appear here are indicative of the spread of this family of artist with the passage of time' (p. 19).

CHAPTER 9

TIME RENEWED

1 These versions are from the Mahābhārata (12.59.99–103) and the Bhāgavata Purāṇa (4.13.25–47; 4.14.1–46; 4.15.1ff).

2 I am very grateful to my friend Edward Hale of the Center for the Study of World Religions for bringing this story to my attention and translating it. Edward Hale is writing his Ph.D. thesis on the word *asura* in the Vedic literature.

3 The king's red silk attire is not traditional. When this picture was taken in July 1981, because of faulty communication between the temple administrator, the temple priests, and the palace, the king was first told that the ritual would not take place that day since it was already dusk. (The ritual should not take place at night.) However, the temple priests had not received this message from the temple administrator and had already taken Lakṣmī's palanquin out. This meant the ritual had to proceed. The king therefore had to dress in haste and donned this silk *dhoti*. He told me that the normal attire is the same as the one he wears for the sweeping of the chariots.

4 In his essay 'Navakalevara: The Unique Ceremony of the "Birth" and the "Death" of the "Lord of the World" ', G. C. Tripathi argues that the role of goddess Mangaḷā is due to fortuitous historical circumstances. This is what he writes about

the dream *mantra* which is recited by the brahmins in her temple in order to get in a dream directions as to where to find the trees:

> The Mantra is addressed to Viṣṇu and not to the goddess Mangaḷā. Nowhere in this Mantra the devotee asks Viṣṇu to lead him to the tree which should bear the characteristic marks of a *brahmadāru*. And if for three nights the party fails to get any instruction from Mangaḷā, it has to interpret the flowers falling down from the image of the Goddess as a sign of the direction in which to proceed! All this shows that the incorporation of the goddess Mangaḷā is a much later trait in the ceremony of Navakalevara. It seems that the party looking for Dāru usually came to Kakatpur and stayed, for the sake of convenience, in the temple of Mangaḷā to find out a suitable tree in the forest of the Nīma trees situated nearby. The goddess Mangaḷā herself, however, had originally no role to play in the ceremony of Navakalevara (1978:242–3).

In my view, whatever the historical circumstances might have been, and it is very difficult to establish these, the fact that goddess Mangaḷā is the one who sends the dreams with the information about the whereabouts of the trees, is significant in itself. I see no reason to give priority in analysis of rituals to verbal actions and to texts and to disregard other actions.

5 On the occasion of the previous Naba Kalebara, which took place in 1969, Amrapalli composed a song which she and the others sang while the *daitās* were fashioning the images inside the temporary structure. Amrapalli belongs to the Gauḍiya Vaishnavite sect and this is quite apparent in the song which treats Jagannātha as Krishna in Brundāban. She classifies the time of the festival as belonging to the realm of 'sweetness' (*mādhurjya*).

The most often repeated word is the word 'new' (*naba*). This repeated emphasis on the new Jagannātha is in contrast to the work of the *daitās*, who although they are fashioning the new bodies, are the specialists of the old, of the past.

Translation of Amrapalli's song:

What have you shown [us], holder of the discus and the conchshell, Oh Jagannātha
The vanished notes of the flute, how did they return?
The young and the old, men and women, they all rushed.
In order to make those who do not sing your praises, praise you
You display these signs, Oh Jagannātha.
You performed your *rasa mandala* [round dance] in Champajhara [village where the tree of Jagannātha was found in that year].
Those who possess knowledge and perform actions have lost themselves in the emotion of the gopī [*gopī bhāba*].
At the edge of the milk ocean,
You secretly gave the gods the black and white signs.
Seeing the signs of your thin and faded clothes
My Rādhā has become full of sorrow.
You make others cry so much, you yourself cry.
You have written a letter begging forgiveness.
This is not a new sign, it is the new body,
You have become young.
All the new bowers have been decorated,

They are adorned with firecrackers.
Today I will color you in different hues,
Among the group of goddesses doing the sebā.
The bhoga maṇḍapa, the platform, the garden,
All around the temple, everything is adorned.
What shall I say about *mādhurjya* and *aiśwarjya*?
Everything is new, new, this is the pure *mādhurjya*.
The temple holds your new body,
There is the divine dance [*rāsa*], aesthetic tasting [rasa], dance and song.
Seeing everything new do not forget
To cast a side glance at those who sing your praises.
My new white body,
Will he come back with a new body?
The dwellers of Nīḷācala are your own people,
Apart from you there is no salvation.
While sitting and looking your people
Are joyously waiting to do your sebā.

In your new body, decorated with a new dress,
You will break the resolution of the new maidens. [to restrain themselves]
Just like the four kinds of Gopīs
In gopāpuri held you in the divine play.
I am a new *dāsī* very poor and low;
With no steadiness, no sebā, no devotion, no worship.
With no salary, behind Garuḍa
I will take your name.

6 G. C. Tripathi writes that it is the temple servants of *karaṇa* caste (called Datta Mahāpātra) who do this (ibid.:262) but all my informants said that it was done by the *daitās*.

7 Tambiah in his article 'From Varṇa to Caste through Mixed Unions' quotes the following rule from the Viṣṇu dharmaśāstra (XXII:19): 'Wives and slaves in the direct order of the castes (i.e. who do not belong to a higher caste than their lord) remain impure as long as their lord.' This is in the case of death pollution (Tambiah 1974:211). Thus even if the devadasis are taken as concubines rather than wives, they should also observe the same length of impurity as other members of the *kuṭumba*.

8 The songs sung by a devadasi during Bimalā's festival are called *māḷaśrī*. Here is the translation of one of these songs in which the identification between Bimalā and Durgā is clear, as well as her identification with other, unmarried, village goddesses.

The Māḷaśrī of Sarbamangaḷā
Mother, you are none other than the 'All auspicious' (*sarbamangaḷā*).
Your name is Ambikā, you serve at the feet of Hari.
You are the agent of creation and destruction.
You are the destroyer of the burdens of the earth.
You are the victorious 'All Auspicious,' holder of the trident and destroyer of the demons.
Mother, at the time of danger, your name is a raft.
At Puruṣottama [Puri] you are the realised (?) (*siddha*) Bimalā.

By the banks of the river Prāci your name is Sarbamangaḷā.
By the banks of the river Candrabhāga your name is Śrī Rāmacaṇḍī.
Again, by taking your name all troubles vanish.
Mother, in Jajapura your name is Birajā.
Śrī Rāma worshipped you as the rider of the lion.
In Bānapura your name is Bhagabatī.
Again, in Banki you are called Carccikayī.
Your name is Baliharacaṇḍī.
You reside in the eight directions.
In all the various localities you destroy evil.
Always saving the gods from danger.
The buffalo demon was killed by the strength of your arm.
You killed the demons Madhu and Kaithabha.
Śumbha and Niśumbha, the messengers of the buffalo demon,
You killed them by means of your divinely playful weapons (?)
(*Līlāyuddha*)
Mother, whoever takes your name everyday
You set him free and his troubles vanish.
At the time of sorrow your name is a boat.
Mother, I am low and nameless, Oh Ambikā preserve me!

9 For a succinct, short and excellent discussion of this verse see Thomas J. Hopkins, *The Hindu Religious Tradition*, 1971, pp. 22–5.

10 For puranic myths on the *yugas* and the dissolution of Time see Dimmitt and Van Buitenen *Classical Hindu Mythology*, 1978, pp. 36–44.

11 Charlotte Vaudeville (personal communication) has suggested that Sitaḷā's water stands for the amniotic fluid.

12 For this myth see Dimmitt and Van Buitenen, op. cit.

13 In Sri Lanka, at the temple of the tooth in Kandy, the same belief is held about the relationship between the king who arranges for a festival featuring a procession and rain. Seneviratne in his book *Rituals of the Kandyan State* has chosen the following quotation as the epigraph for it:

> . . . once upon a time through the influence of evil planets a great heat arose in Lanka (Ceylon) by which everything was burnt up, when the corn withered . . . the King gave orders for a splendid festival to be held . . . and (caused them to) bear the Tooth Relic of the Great Sage round the town in a fitting manner, the right side turned towards it . . . Thereupon great thundering . . . and they began to rain, destroying the glowing heat, making joyful the people . . . and reviving the corn (Culavaṃśa) (1978).

Some scholars have argued that Jagannātha was originally the Buddha (Mahtab 1947:150–69; Dasgupta 1942:277). In the *Gīta Govinda* the ninth avatar of Viṣṇu is called Buddha (Stoler Miller 1977:71). The ninth avatar is in Oriya representations of the ten *avatars* of Viṣṇu shown as Jagannātha. Thus although there is far from a concensus among scholars about the buddhist origins of Jagannātha, the belief still survives today about the identity between Jagannātha and the Buddha. This is even true in North India where on some calendars the Ninth incarnation of Viṣṇu is also represented as the Buddha.

14 For a fuller discussion of this problem see Marglin 'Types of Oppositions in Hindu Culture' in *Purity and Auspiciousness*, edited by Carman and Marglin, Brill, Indian Society (in press).

CONCLUSION

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

1 I first presented these ideas in 1978 in a series of papers delivered at several conferences. See Marglin (1978a, 1978b, 1978c, 1978d).

2 The proceedings of this conference are being published as a special volume of *Contributions to Asian Studies*, Brill, Leiden (in press, ca. 1983) entitled *Purity and Auspiciousness in Indian Society*, edited by J. Carman and F. Marglin. The contributors are: J. Carman, A. Hiltebeitel, R. Inden, P. Jaini, T. N. Madan, F. A. Marglin, V. Narayanan and S. Tambiah. Three participants in the conference did not contribute papers to the volume; they are McKim Marriott, Fritz Stahl and Joanne Waghorne.

3 See Dumont's new preface to the 1979 Tel edition of *Homo Hierarchicus*.

4 I am here using Pierce's trichonomy of signs: index, icon and symbol. In the iconography of the snake coiled around a *liṅgaṁ*, the iconic element is the joining of the two opposites: the head and the tail, as well as the fact that the snake coils around, or embraces, the *liṅgaṁ*. The symbolic element is the femaleness of the snake and the fact that it represents 'energy'. See Pierce (1932).

5 As Diana Eck pointed out to me, the Hindi word for 'to be able to' is *sakna*; this word has the same root as the Sanskrit verb *sak-* (*saknoti*) meaning the same thing. This is the same root as in *śakti*. In Oriya that word, to my knowledge, is not used for meaning 'to be able to'; the compound verb *pari-karibā* is used; *karibā* means 'to do' and *pari-* 'to be able to'.

6 For a more extensive treatment of the parallel between the king and the wife see my article 'Kings and Wives: The Separation of Status and Royal Power' in *Contributions to Indian Sociology* (n.s.), Vol. 15, Nos 1 & 2, 1981, 155–81.

7 This has been noted by another anthropologist, Steven Kemper, who writes the following about astrology:

> One of the defining characteristics of Ayurvedic healing in South Asia is its search for what is appropriate both to the time (Skt. *kāla-satmya*) and to the place (*deśa-satmya*). The same can be said of South Asian astrology. The person is treated astrologically not as standing apart from time and place, but in relation to both. As time proceeds, his condition changes; as his locus varies, so does his nature. In short, because the person is embedded in these two *a priori* conditions, he is embedded in the very fact of change. The corollary to this proposition is more interesting still. Because all persons are changing, to that extent at least all persons are the same. Male and female, young and old, high caste and low caste—all are equally bound by these conditions. The logic of astrological thought implies that all people are in this one way the same: all can be scrutinized simply as persons (Kemper 1978:1).

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Glossary

abhinaya	Dance which includes facial expressions performed to a sung text.
abhiṣeka	Lit. sprinkling; royal consecration ceremony.
achyuta	Lit. the unfallen; an epithet of Krishna.
adhāra poṇā	'Lip drink' offered during *ratha jātrā*; *poṇā* is made with milk, cheese, and bananas.
adhikāra	Ownership, right; entitlement.
adi puruṣa	Lit. original man; first ancestor.
adibāsi	Lit. original dweller; tribal.
ādya sebāka	First or chief servant; applied to the king of Puri.
agni	Fire; god of fire.
agyāmāḷa	Garland of order.
ahankāra	Egocentrism; self-importance.
ahya	Married woman whose husband is alive; non-widowed woman.
aiśwarjya	Sovereignty; lordship.
ajā	Mother's father.
ajatiā	Without caste; illegitimate.
akhaḍā	Men's body building organization or club.
akhanda dīpa	Unbroken or continuous (ghī or oil) lamp.
alatā	Red dye used by married women to decorate the contours of their feet.
ālata lāgi	Fanning (the deities) as an offering.
amābāsyā	New-moon or no-moon day/night.
amangaḷa	Inauspicious.
āmṛta	Nectar; ambrosia.
aṇasara	Period of illness for the deities in Jagannātha temple during the dark fortnight of *āṣāḍha*
anga	Body; limb.
anga dubāiba	Dipping the body, i.e. sexual union.
anga lāgi	Giving or offering the body.
anga sparśa	Touching the body.

anjali Folded hands; gesture of greeting.
anjuli Cupped hands.
ankuṣa Elephant's goad.
aṇṭi Front end of the sari.
anukūḷa Good beginning.
anuloma With the grain; with the hair; favorable.
apabitra Impure.
apsaras Heavenly courtesan at the court of the king of the gods, Indra.
arddhangiṇī The wife as the husband's half body.
ārua cāuḷa White uncooked rice.
āṣāḍha Month of June–July.
āsakti Attachment; love.
asampurṇa Incomplete; not whole.
āsaṇa Seat.
aśauca Impure.
āśīrbāda Blessing.
āśrama Stage of life; also hermitage.
asti Bones.
aśubha Inauspicious.
āświn Month of September–October.
aśvapati Lord of horses; a dynastic title.

baḍa Great, big.
bāhāra Outside.
bahu Daughter-in-law.
baibāhita bandhu Relatives by marriage.
baidya Traditional physician.
baiśākha Month of April–May.
baiṣṇab Vaishnavite; person who has dedicated his/her life to devotion to God.
bajantari The group of musicians attached to the temple and the palace.
bāḷa Hair; boy; newly born; morning sun.
bali Offering; victim; sacrifice; tax.
bandana Adoration; invocation; praise; salute; welcome.
bandāpanā Act of showing adoration; praise; salute; welcome.
bangśa Lineage; ancestral line; more generally 'family'.
bangśa paramparā Family or ancestral tradition.
bangśa śeṣa End of a line or lineage.

barddhani	Increaser; growth.
bārika	Barber.
bārṣika	Annual; yearly.
bāsanda	Forbidding entry to; ousting.
beḍhapua	Son of a concubine.
beśa	Dress; decoration.
beśyā	Lit. the decorated one (fem.); a courtesan or prostitute.
beśyāpua	Son of a courtesan or prostitute.
beṭa	Cane; rod.
bhāba	Feeling; emotion; thought; meaning.
bhādraba	Month of August–September.
bhajana	Song of praise to a deity; hymn.
bhakta	Devoted to; attached to.
bhātta	Boiled rice; meal.
bhaya	Fear.
bhoga	Enjoyment; offering of food to a deity.
bibāha	Wedding; marriage.
bideśi	Stranger; foreigner.
bidhabā	Widow.
biḍi	Leaf cigarette; also black gram.
bighna	Obstacle; impediment; obstruction; difficulty.
bimāna	Conveyance for carrying movable deities.
biparita rati	Inverse sexual union; the position for intercourse with the woman lying on top of the man.
bīra	Warrior; hero.
bīrjya	Semen.
biṣa	Poison.
biṭapī strī	adulteress.
brata	Vow; thread ceremony (Skt. *upanayana*).
cākara	Servant
cakra	Wheel; circle.
calanti devi	Walking goddess; living goddess.
calanti viṣṇu	Walking Vishnu; living Vishnu.
candan	Sandalwood; sandal paste.
cāpa	Boat.
cautiśā	A 34; i.e. a poem with verses beginning with each of the 34 consonants of the Oriya alphabet.

chittā	Sandal paste mark on the nose.
chuā	Menstrual blood; untouchable; unclean.
chuī	Touching.
chutikā	Birth pollution.
citrakāra	Painter; person of the painter caste.
cora	Thief.
corā priti	Stolen love.
cuḍa	Flattened uncooked rice.
daitā	A group of temple servants descended from tribals who care for the deities during their 'illness' and 'death'.
damaru	Double-headed hand drum in the shape of two inverted cones; identified with Śiva.
dāna	Donation; present; gift.
daṇḍa	Stick; staff; mace; punishment; royal function of keeping order.
dāripilā	Child of a prostitute.
darśana	Seeing; viewing; beholding; also a philosophical school.
dāsī	Woman servant, attendant.
dāsiputra	Son of a concubine.
deha	Body.
dei	Courtesan attached to the palace.
deuḷa	Temple.
deva	God.
devadāsī	Lit. female servant of a god; the women temple servants.
dharmaśāstra	Sacred law-books; sacred writings.
dhobāṇī	Wife of the washerman.
dhoti	Men's lower garment.
dhuba	A kind of grass.
dhūpa nāca	Morning dance ritual in the temple.
dhyāna	Contemplation; meditation.
digvijaya	Conquering the (ten) directions.
dina	Day.
dolāvedi	Swing platform; in Jagannātha temple found outside of the north-east corner of the temple.
doṣa	Sin; crime; illicit act.
druṣṭi	Sight; vision; knowledge; wisdom.

duārapāḷa Guardian of the gate.
duijā Twice-born.

gādhuā Bath.
gajapati Lord of the elephants; title of Orissan dynasty.
gaṇikā Courtesan; prostitute.
garbha gṛha Lit. womb-house; inner sanctum of temple.
gārhastya dharma The sacred duty of the housewife.
gāuṇī Songstress.
ghara House; room.
ghara bhauṇī Lit. house sister; husband's unmarried sister.
ghara jagyā Lit. house sacrifice; puberty ceremony.
ghara loka Household members.
ghaṭa Pitcher; vessel.
ghī Clarified butter.
ghur Unrefined sugar (from sugarcane).
gīta Song.
gopā Cowherd.
gopī Cowherdess.
gotipua Lit. one son or single son; male dancer of Oḍissi.
gotra Clan or clan title.
guā Betel nut.
gupta Secret; hidden; concealed.
guru dikhya Sectarian initiation.

habiṣa (Partial) fast.
hāḍī Sweeper; member of an untouchable caste.
hāṇḍi Cooking pot.
hasta gaṇṭhi Hand-knot; tying the hands of the bride and groom at the wedding ceremony.
hulā-huli Sound made by women by rapidly moving the tongue from side to side of the lips; performed at auspicious events.

jāgāghara Men's body-building association.
jaḷa Water.
jaṇāna Devotional song beseeching the deity.
japa Repetition of prayer or incantation.
jāti Species; caste; ethnic group; race.

jātrā or *yātrā*	Festival; fair; pilgrimage.
jāutuka	Dowry.
jinisa	Thing.
juī	Son-in-law.
jyeṣṭha	Month of May–June; eldest.
jyeṣṭhānsa	Eldest's share (of the inheritance).
kāca	Glass; glass bangles.
kajala	Eye-black (a cosmetic).
kākā	Father's younger brother.
kaḷaśa	Water-pot.
kāmāṇḍa	Blinded by lust.
kanyā	Unmarried daughter; virgin; maiden.
karāp	Bad.
karṇa bedha	Ear-piercing ceremony.
karpura āḷati	Camphor-lamp offering.
kārtika	Month of October–November.
karttā	Head of household (masc.); lit. doer.
karttrī	Head of household (fem.).
kāvya	Poem.
khetra	Field.
khyaṇika sukha	Short-lived happiness or pleasure; fleeting pleasure.
kriḍā	Amorous sport or play.
kriyā	Action; ritual.
kṛṣṇa pakhya	Dark fortnight; waning moon.
kṣetrapāḷa	Guardian of the field.
kuḷa	Lineage; family line.
kuḷa purohita	Family priest.
kumāri pūjā	Worship of a virgin or unmarried girl/woman.
kuṇḍa	Pool; basin.
kuṭumba	Blood relatives.
līlā	Play; sport.
lajjā or *lāja*	Modesty; bashfulness; shyness; shame.
mādhurjya	Sweetness; realm of love (*prema*) contrasted to realm of sovereignty (*aiśwarjya*).
mahālayā	Last day of fortnight of the ancestors (dark fortnight of month of *āświn*).

mahanta Head of a monastery (*matha*).
mahāpraśād Food offered in Jagannātha's temple.
mahārāṇī Queen.
māhārī Oriya term for a devadasi.
mahāsnāna Lit. great (purificatory) bath; purification of Jagannātha's temple.
māi Mother's brother's wife.
maithuna Sexual union.
māmū Mother's brother; any close male friend of mother's brother's generation.
maṇḍala Circle; sphere; orb.
mangaḷa Auspicious.
mānohi Term used to refer to the eating of the king and the deities.
mardaḷi Drummer in the temple; brother of a devadasi.
mārgaśira Month of November–December.
marttya loka World of mortals.
māru Menstrual blood; polluted.
māsikiā Monthlies; menses.
matha Monastery.
mātuḷa Mother's father's ancestral line.
maulā Colloquial for *mahālayā*.
māusi Mother's sister; any female friend of mother's generation.
mela sebā Group ritual.
miḷana Union; mixing; joining; a tryst.
mokṣa Liberation.
mrutikā Death pollution.
mudiratha Representative of the king in rituals.
mudrā Black gram cakes used in a *śākta* ritual.
mukha Face.

naba jaubana New youth.
nabagraha Nine planets.
nāca Dance.
narapati Lord of men; dynastic title.
nārī Woman.
nāta maṇḍapa Hall of dance.
netroścaba Festival of the (opening of the) eye.
niyam Rule; norm.

nijoga	A ritual division among temple servants, traditionally numbering 36.
nimantraṇa	Invitation.
nirmālya	Dried *mahāpraśād*.
nitya	Continuous; always; eternal.
oinṭhā	Left-over food (polluted).
pabitra	Pure.
pāduka	Water from washing the feet of a deity or superior person.
pahuḍa (or *pahaḍa*)	Sleep; time of sleep.
paitā	Sacred thred.
pālanti	Adopted.
pāḷe	He/she mourns.
pāli	One's share of temple ritual duty.
pālinki	Palanquin.
paṇḍā	Temple brahmin priest.
pāṇiachuā	Lit. 'water not touching'; castes which cannot give water to brahmins.
pāṇiaspruśya	Same as above.
pāṇichuā	Lit. 'water touching'; castes which can give water to brahmins.
pāṇispruśya	Same as above.
pāpa	Sin; vice; crime; offence; illicit action.
paragotraya	Of another clan.
parakiyā	Woman belonging to another man.
parambrahman	Highest god; supreme being.
paribāra	Household members; family.
paribārtana	Changing (sides).
pati	Lord; husband.
pātrī	Bride; copper pot.
paṭuāra	Ceremonial procession.
pauṣa	Month of December–January.
phala	Fruit; result (of past actions).
phalaprada	Fruitful.
pīlā	Child.
piṇḍa	Lump; ball; globule; food offered to the ancestors; body.
pitrukuḷa	Line of ancestors.

pitru loka	World of the ancestors.
pitru pakhya	Fortnight of the ancestors.
pracchanna	Secret.
prakṛti	Matter; nature.
pralaya	Dissolution of the world at the end of an eon (*kalpa*).
prāṇapratiṣṭhā	Establishment of breath, life (in an image).
pratiloma	Against the grain or hair; reverse; low.
pratinidhi	Representative; proxy; substitute.
pratiṣṭhā	Consecration ceremony; to endow with divine power and faculties; ground; basis; support.
prāyaścitta	Penance; expiation of sin.
prema	Love; affection.
preta loka	World of the departed; of ghosts.
priya	Beloved (masc.).
priyā	Beloved (fem.).
pruthibī	The earth.
pua	Son.
pūjā	Temple worship.
pūjāriṇī	Female temple attendant.
punahah bibāha	Lit. again marriage; puberty ceremony.
puṇya	Virtue; merit; piety.
purāṇa	Ancient; ancient story.
purṇa kumbha	Full pot; full pitcher.
purṇānga	Full-limbed; complete; whole.
purṇimā	Full-moon.
puruṣa	Man; person.
raja	Female sexual secretion; menstrual blood.
rājā	King.
rajabati	Pubertal girl.
rājadhūpa	Morning main meal offering in the temple.
rājaguru	Preceptor of the king.
rajaswala	Menstruating woman.
rājopacāra	Royal offering.
rākhāsa	Demon.
rakhitā	Concubine.
rakta	Blood.
rakta samparka	Blood relatives.
raṇḍī or *raṇḍā*	Widow (pejorative); harlot.

ratha	Chariot.
ratha dāhuka	Chariot caller.
rāti	Night.
ratna	Jewel; gem; precious stone.
rāuta	Deputy; cavalry man.
ruṇa (ṛṇa)	Debt
rutu (ṛtu)	Season; menses.
śabara	Tribal
sādhā	White; colorless.
sadhabā	Non-widowed woman.
sāḍhibandhana	Tying the sari; dedication ceremony of temple servants.
sahki-bhāba	Feeling; emotion; thought belonging to a female friend (of Krishna).
śākta	Worshipper of the Great Goddess.
śakti	Female energy; power; strength.
śaḷā	Wife's brother; also an insult.
samaya	Time.
samkranti	Passage of the sun from one sign of the zodiac to another.
sampurṇa	Full; complete; whole.
samsāra	Family; passage of time; cycle of death and rebirth.
samskāra	Life-cycle ritual; refining; cultivating.
śankha	Conch-shell.
śankhuā sebā	Ritual service of conch-blowing.
śankula bhāra	Lit. invitation basket; gifts between affines.
sannyāsa	The state of renouncement.
sannyāsi	Renouncer.
śāpa	Curse.
sapta	Seven.
śāsan	Administration; class of brahmins (high, learned).
śāsu	Mother-in-law.
śāsura	Father-in-law.
sayaṇa ṭhākura	Sleeping lord.
sebā	Service; attendance; worship.
sebāka	Temple servant (masc.).
sebikā	Temple servant (fem.).
seja morāibā	To touch the bed.

sindura — Red powder worn on the forehead and the parting of the hair by married women.

sindura śiri — Red line on forehead made with *sindura*.

sindura ṭapā — Red round dot on the forehead made with *sindura*.

simhāduāra — Lion gate.

simhāri — Class of temple brahmin priest who decorate the deities.

snāna — Bath; purificatory bath.

solāpūjā — 16-day worship (of the goddess).

śrāddha — Ancestor worship.

śrungāra rasa — Erotic mood; flavor.

strī — Woman.

suāra — Class of temple brahmin priests who cook in the temple kitchen.

śubha — Auspicious.

śuddha — Pure

śuddhi kriyā — Purificatory ritual.

śūdra — Fourth and lowest varṇa

sukhila bhoga — Dried raw food offering.

śukla pakhya — Bright fortnight; waxing moon.

śulka — Royal tax; bride-price.

sunā — Gold.

suniā — The golden, a royal festival.

surā — Wine; alcoholic beverage.

swagotraya — One's own clan.

swakiyā — One's own woman; wife

swāmi — Lord; husband.

swargabeśyā — Heavenly courtesan.

taḷisebikā — The women attached to the temple and the palace, i.e. the deis and the devadasis.

tāmbūḷa — Betal leaf.

tarpaṇa — Satisfying; offering an oblation to the ancestors.

tattva — Essence; truth.

ṭhākur — Lord; god.

ṭhākurāṇī — Lady; goddess.

tīrtha — Ford; pilgrimage place.

tīrtha jātrā — Pilgrimage.

tithi Lunar day.
toḷā kanyā Lit. plucking the maiden; form of marriage involving bride-price instead of dowry.
tulāsi Basil plant, sacred to Vishnu.

ucchiṣṭa Left-over food (polluted).
ultā Opposite; reverse; upside-down.
upabāsa (Total) fast.
upabhoga Sexual enjoyment.
upacāra Article of worship.
upanayana (Skt.) Initiation ceremony for sons of twice-born men; thread ceremony; Oriya: *brata*.
uścaba Festival; ceremony.

yajamāna Patron; person who has a sacrifice performed and who reaps its benefits.
yantra Sacred design; machine, engine.
yātrā See *jātrā*
yoni Female genitalia; origin, source, cause.

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